Bush says he doesn't need UN approval to go to war

Story below, Column 1

2nd Anniversary
inq7 Beyond

Supplement / SECTION E

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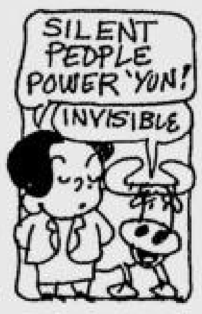
Palace cool to criticism on lack of warm bodies

By Carlito Pablo



WHAT, us worry?

Malacañang yesterday appeared unperturbed that this year's commemoration of People Power I had drawn a mere trickle of warm bodies.

PALACE/A16

Moro rebs step up offensives in South

MILF: Attacks to continue to avenge gov't assaults

TUG-OF-WAR AT PALACE GATES: The game is played out between plainclothesmen and anti-war demonstrators outside Malacañang on Wednesday even as the United States continues to move closer to the brink of war. AFP

By the PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Heeding Salamat Hashim's call to "fight till death," members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) stepped up attacks on government positions, killing five soldiers and a civilian in Tungawan and Payao towns in Zamboanga Sibugay.

Sporadic firefights also broke out in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and North Cotabato. In Maguindanao, the MILF destroyed a steel tower of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) Tuesday night, bringing to 14 the steel towers that the Moro rebels had toppled and damaged since fighting began on Feb. 11.

"These were simultaneous attacks against our troops. The rebels have apparently complied with the directive of Salamat Hashim," Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya said.

On Monday evening, Salamat aired his call to war in a 30-minute taped message over Radio dxCM in Cotabato City.

The elusive MILF chair said the government had continuously violated previous agreements including one on the cessation of hostilities. "We are pushed to the wall, we have to fight back," Salamat said. "All who have firearms must fight till death."

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the attacks would continue. "We are only giving back what the government did to us," he said, referring to the massive military assault on the MILF in Pikit, North Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao, two weeks ago.

The assault led to the capture of the Buliok Complex, which the MILF converted into a main camp after the fall of Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao in 2000. At least 157 rebels were killed in the five-day assault, according to the military.

Abaya said the soldiers killed in clashes with the MILF following Salamat's call belonged to the 33rd Infantry Battalion in Tun-

MILF/A17

Jolo babies put to sleep with songs of revenge

By Norman Borďadora and Cynthia D. Balana

THE PEOPLE of Jolo sing of revenge when they lull their babies to sleep.

This was what Parouk Hussin, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, told reporters yesterday in the course of raising a warning against the supposed planned deployment of US combat troops in the capital town of Sulu.

"The Tausug, when they lull their babies to sleep, do not sing 'Summertime' or 'Hush, Little Baby.' They sing ballads like, 'Go to sleep so you'll be strong so you can avenge the atrocities committed on your father,'" Hussin said.

He was referring to the bloody US pacification campaign against the Tausug, the people of Jolo, during the American colonial period in the early 20th century. "They do not want a situation where these sad memories will be rekindled," he said.

Hussin also said that even with US

JOLO/A16

GMA friend manages $13B projects

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENTIAL Chief of Staff Rigoberto "Bobi" Tiglao isn't the only person in Malacañang with new powers.

PDI FILE PHOTO

JIMENEZ: The real chief of staff?

Marita "Mai-Mai" Jimenez, a trusted associate of President Macapagal-Arroyo since Ms Macapagal's days at the Department of Trade and Industry, was appointed "Secretary for the President's Priority Programs and Official Development Assistance (ODA) Projects" effective Feb. 10.

In her new role as Cabinet secretary, Jimenez will have a say in the disbursement of the President's economic and social funds. She will also monitor how

GMA/A16

Bush: War doesn't need UN approval

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush on Tuesday said he did not need Security Council approval of a new US-backed resolution to launch military action against Baghdad, even as Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein vowed to die in his homeland rather than go into exile.

Bush's remarks emphasized his intention to bypass the United Nations and attack Iraq if the Security Council failed to approve the resolution introduced on Monday by the United States, Britain and Spain.

Only disarmament by Saddam could avert war, Bush said following UN reports that Iraq had provided new information about its weapons and the discovery of two bombs, including one possibly filled with a biological agent.

Chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix said Baghdad's moves signaled real cooperation. Bush, however, predicted Saddam would try "to fool the world one more time" by revealing the existence of some weapons of mass destruction that the Iraqi president had previously denied having.

BUSH/A17

Retired US general calls military strategy 'criminal'

WASHINGTON—A retired American general who directed the 1991 Gulf War air campaign on Tuesday denounced the US military strategy for a possible new war with Iraq as "criminal," saying it would risk more American and allied lives than necessary.

Retired Air Force Gen. Buster Glosson expressed alarm about what he described as a US rush to conclude an air campaign within a few days and warned that war plans fell short on the critical need to wipe out elite Republican Guard units—the key to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's survival.

"How do you ethically defend the time we're taking to make a political decision (on using military force against Iraq) and then try to rush a military operation and finish it in a matter of days? Criminal," Glosson told the American Enterprise Institute.

RETIRED/A17

VAL HANDUMON

OFWS' SAFETY ASSURED

Prime Minister of Bahrain Sheik Khalifa bin Salma Al Khalifa assures President Macapagal during their meeting on Wednesday that his country will look after the welfare of 30,000 Filipino workers if war breaks out in the Middle East. *(Story on Page A3)*

HK slashes maids' monthly salary by $51 starting April

By Cookie Micaller
Contributor

HONG KONG—The Hong Kong government said yesterday it would cut the minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers by 11 percent, or HK$400 (US$51), to HK$3,270 beginning April 1. The cut would bring the wage rate for foreign domestic helpers to the 1992 level.

The decision was announced by Donald Tsang, chief secretary for administration when he met with members of the Legislative Council. It was a decision widely anticipated by foreign maids and Philippine officials in light of declining revenues and an economic slowdown.

The decision will affect some 240,000 foreign domestic helpers of whom 153,000 are Filipino workers.

In Manila, Senate President Franklin

HK/A17

St. Luke's doctors fix Kitkat's heart

By Ernie Sarmiento in Manila and Grace Albasin, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

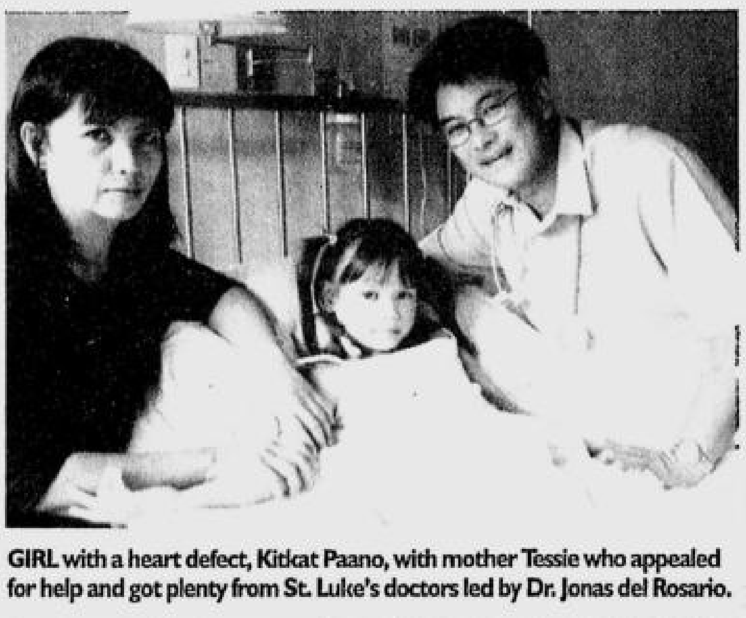
"IS IT finished?"

These were the first words of 7-year-old Tracy "Kitkat" Elyana Paano to her mother, Tessie, when she woke up on Tuesday morning after undergoing a heart "operation."

The day before, a team of doctors from St. Luke's Medical Center implanted a device that would plug a 1.5-cm hole in Kitkat's heart.

Tessie and her husband Emmanuel—both government employees—could not afford the cost of an open-

ST. LUKE'S/A16



ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

GIRL with a heart defect, Kitkat Paano, with mother Tessie who appealed for help and got plenty from St. Luke's doctors led by Dr. Jonas del Rosario.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern section of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/27/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains.

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Second FRONTPAGE

Cabinet 'drug war' erupts

By Gil Cabacungan

A DIFFERENT kind of drug war has erupted in the Cabinet.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II has charged the Department of Heath with sabotaging the President's campaign to bring down medicine prices in the country.

At yesterday's hearing of the House oversight committee, Roxas said the DOH abandoned the DTI's "Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya" project that was anchored on a parallel importation program to bring in cheap off-patent drugs from India.

Oversight committee

Oversight committee chair Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said Roxas revealed that the DOH had unilaterally decided to take a different tack in President Macapagal-Arroyo's program by promoting instead the sale of local generic drugs to pull medicine prices down.

Roxas presented a memorandum that detailed a meeting on Feb. 24 between DOH officials and the Pharmaceutical Association of the Philippines—a group of multinational drug companies fiercely opposed to the drug imports—where the agency outlined its new strategy.

Salceda said Roxas begrudged the DOH its half-hearted support for the "Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya" program, which was thought up by Roxas when he was majority floor leader in the House of Representatives.

Salceda said the DOH has not paid a centavo to the Philippine International Trading Corp.—a DTI agency tasked to import the drugs—nearly two years since the program's launch.

Imported drugs

Government hospitals under the DOH received P65 million worth of the cheap imported drugs from the PITC but only P20 million worth was sold as of last year.

The DOH likewise has not placed any new orders to replenish its stocks, severely curtailing any impact the cheaper drugs might have on local drug prices. These prices were reportedly as high as 10 times the Indian medicines' prices.

Salceda said his committee has taken this as proof of the DOH's efforts to undermine the DTI program.

But Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit denied that he had connived with multinational drug companies to undermine the government program to reduce the prices of medicine.

In a telephone interview, Dayrit said the DOH has been doing everything it could to push the sale of cheap medicines from India.

But, he said, the scheme, where only government hospitals were selling the cheap medicines, had a limited potential to bring down the prices of medicine.

"The government is just not a pharmaceutical company," he said, of the difficulty encountered by the government in buying and selling cheap drugs.

Thus, he said, the DOH is now negotiating with local drug manufacturers and distributors to join the program to "widen the variety of and access to cheap medicines."

Salceda said the dispute has hampered the President's campaign to bring down drug prices by as much as 50 percent within one year.

Promise

The President made the promise in her 2001 State of the Nation Address.

"We cannot allow the health of the Filipino masses to be taken hostage by the hubris of these two departments or their officials fighting over [turf]," Salceda said.

Congress had earlier declared the drug program a flop, saying the DTI's P200-million budget for the purchase of Indian drugs and the DOH's P480-million allocation to fund its accredited hospitals were too small to make dent in the country's P60 billion a year pharmaceutical market. *With Armand N. Nocum*

6 deaths blamed on drugs with PPA

By Armand N. Nocum

A LEADING toxicologist disclosed yesterday that six Filipinos had died after taking cough and cold medicine containing phenylpropanolamine or PPA, disputing Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit's contention no such deaths had hit the country.

Dr. Nelia Cortes Maramba, founder and now consultant of the UP-PGH National Poisons Control and Information Center, said data from the center showed six PPA-related deaths so far.

In contesting Dayrit's claim, she said, "He should look at our poison control center statistics. There have already been six deaths in the last three years."

She said the deaths were caused by "cardiac arrest because they got into arrhythmia, hypertension, leading to brain hemorrhage."

She said four of the fatalities took PPA-laden drugs to seek relief from coughs and colds and two wanted to lose weight.

Maramba also said that PPA was addictive.

"I would say that it is a possible toxic material and it can be habit-forming," said Maramba, a professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines who once represented the Asia Pacific in the International Narcotics Control Board.

Dayrit had earlier vouched for the safety of the cough and cold medicine in the face of a recent Yale University study indicating drugs with PPA could cause bleeding in the brain.

The US Food and Drug Administration has declared PPA unsafe for use, prompting drug companies to pull out products with the chemical.

"He does not know. He is not a toxicologist, he never inquired from us," Maramba said of Dayrit.

"He is dismissing it on the grounds that no one had reported the deaths to him," she added.

The INQUIRER tried to reach but could not contact Dayrit, who has degrees in public health and field epidemiology. He also did not reply to text messages sent to two of his mobile phones.

Senators' raps vs Agile a smokescreen—Palace

By Carlito Pablo and Gerald Lacuarta

MALACAÑANG yesterday dismissed as a "smokescreen" charges raised by senators that a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) office is interfering with the workings of government and influencing major policies.

Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that allegations of impropriety hurled against the group Accelerating Growth Investment and Liberalization with Equity (Agile) are apparently meant to cover up the lawmakers' failure to legislate amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act that were acceptable to the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

"The March 15 FATF deadline is ticking like a time bomb, threatening our people and our economy," Bunye said.

The interest and welfare of the Filipino people should come first in every major decision, he said, and "Agile has no power to either influence or subvert this principle."

But senators vocal against the group said United States Ambassador Francis Ricciardone might have unwittingly confirmed the clandestine nature of the lobby group's Philippine operations in a radio interview on Tuesday.

Senators polled by the INQUIRER regarding Ricciardone's statement that Agile had previously worked for some senators, including "those who now speak against it," said they were not aware of any such assistance.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said Ricciardone "missed the grand opportunity of keeping quiet when it matters."

The US ambassador said Agile had been set up through the cooperation of the Philippines and the United States, "directed by your government and serves any of your government organizations that need assistance."

Sen. Vicente Sotto, another Agile critic, said it was lamentable that Ricciardone had become a spokesperson for the group. "If your spokesperson is the US ambassador, you must be really big," Sotto said.

"The good ambassador" seemed to be another "victim of the group's misleading lobbying," said Sen. Ralph Recto, who was the first to raise the Agile issue.

"(Agile representatives) are conjuring up this image that they do their work in a very low profile manner," he noted. "But they are "aggressive policy pushers, button-holing members of Congress, participating in meetings, drafting laws and regulations, sitting in inter-agency conferences and orchestrating media campaigns."

Senate President Franklin Drilon, who is leading the Senate inquiry on Agile's Philippine operations, categorically stated that he never received technical assistance from Agile.

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This is to advise that the West Service Road (between Sucat and Alabang) will be closed to traffic for three (3) hours from 12:00 midnight on Saturday, 01 March 2003 to 3:00 A.M. on Sunday, 02 March 2003 to allow Maynilad Water to install a pre-cast concrete butterfly valve vault.

However, during this period of road closure, residents of subdivisions along West Service Road will be able to maintain access to and from their homes from the north-via Sucat flyover.

Through-traffic are requested to take alternative routes between Sucat and Alabang for the three hours that the West Service Road will be closed.

We regret any inconvenience that this operation will cause.

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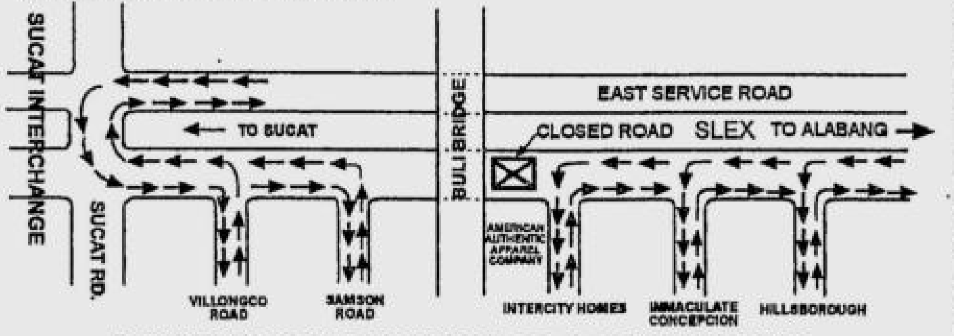

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Japan may slash aid to RP this year

AMBASSADOR Kojiro Takano said yesterday Japanese overseas development assistance to the Philippines this year might be decreased as a result of the economic problems facing the Philippine government.

But Takano said the ODA may be doubled next year if the government is able to solve its financial problems, particularly the huge budget deficit.

"We do not know how much the overseas development assistance will go down this year. But once the Philippine government solves its financial problems, the ODA might even be doubled the following year," Takano said in an interview yesterday.

Development projects under the ODA call for counterpart funds from the Philippine government, which might find it difficult to come up with the required funding at this time.

Takano, nevertheless, announced that the Japanese government was allocating between $100 million and $150 million for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Support Plan. *Norman Bordadora*

OFWs safe, Bahrain assures RP

BAHRAIN'S visiting prime minister said Wednesday the Gulf kingdom will protect the thousands of Filipino workers there in case war broke out in Iraq, Malacañang said.

Sheik Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa "assured me of the continued protection and welfare of our countrymen during the current crisis in the region," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a statement.

Ms Macapagal also thanked Sheik Khalifa for financing projects in Mindanao, which has been wracked by Muslim extremist violence.

Up to 30,000 Filipinos work in Bahrain, including 10,000 maids, as well as engineers, medical workers and hotel employees. *AP*

Financial task force reps finally coming

By Clarissa S. Batino

AMERICAN officials of the Financial Action Task Force's Asia Pacific Group will arrive in Manila this weekend, a highly placed source said yesterday.

The source, who requested anonymity, said a miscue had led to the announcement that the group was to arrive last week, but the weekend schedule was now certain.

The FATF representatives are to meet Monday with the bicameral conference committee to discuss the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

The 29-member FATF has given the Philippines a 30-day period starting Feb. 14 to amend the law. If the Philippines fails to do so, the Paris-based body will start imposing sanctions on the country's offshore transactions.

The source said the FATF representatives would try to convince lawmakers that further refinements to the Amla were required for the Philippines to be taken off the "dirty money" blacklist.

According to the source, the FATF chose to send this time its American representatives in the hope that they would be able "to exercise more influence" on the legislators.

The Asia Pacific head of the FATF met early this month with Filipino lawmakers but failed to make an impact, said another official.

Of the FATF demands, only the threshold reduction was passed by Congress. The bank secrecy law was lifted only for accounts linked to hijacking, kidnapping and drug-related activities.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday insisted that contrary to the charge of Negros Occidental Rep. Herminio Teves, the senators who voted against the amendments had no personal interests to protect.

Lacson said he voted against the lifting of the bank secrecy law in the Amla because the committee had refused to include graft and corruption among the predicate offenses that would not require a court order for the Anti-Money Laundering Council to look into a bank account.

"My stand on this cannot be compromised because I see this provision as an effective tool in disciplining people in government," he said.

Teves had been assigned by Speaker Jose de Venecia to conduct back-channel talks with senators who rejected the amendments required by the FATF.

Lacson said Teves should have exercised prudence in issuing such statements to the media.

Both men are members of the bicameral conference committee.

Sen. Edgardo Angara said lifting the bank secrecy law to conform to FATF demands would scare away bank depositors and undermine the local banking system.

"Switzerland itself is a major member of the FATF," Angara said. "Swiss bank accounts cannot just be opened without a court order. Why can't we do the same?" *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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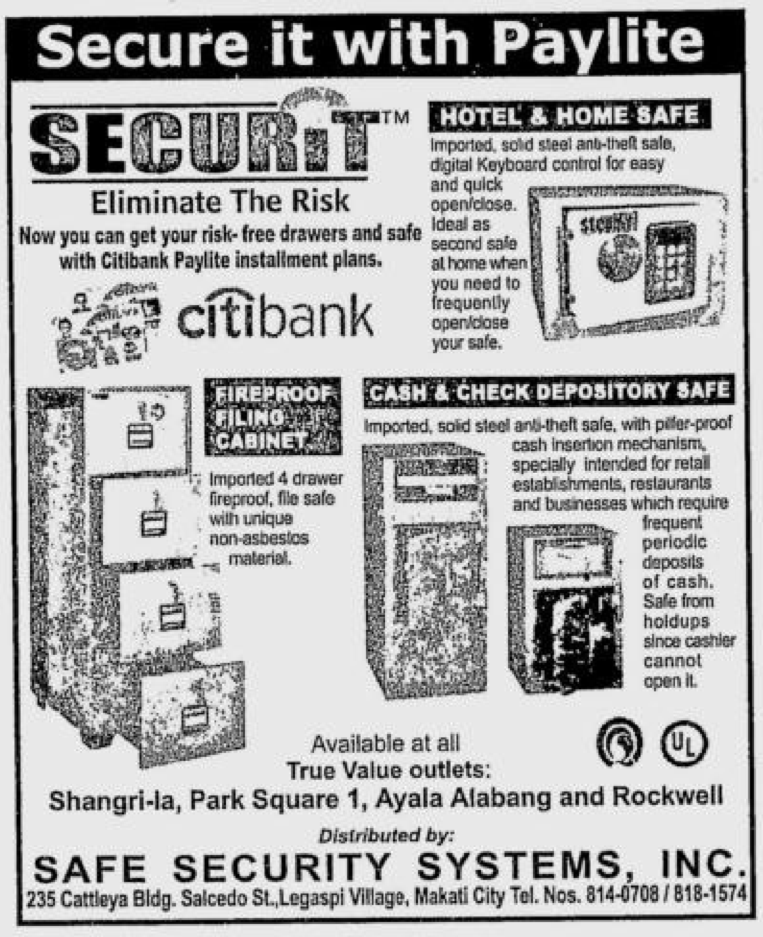

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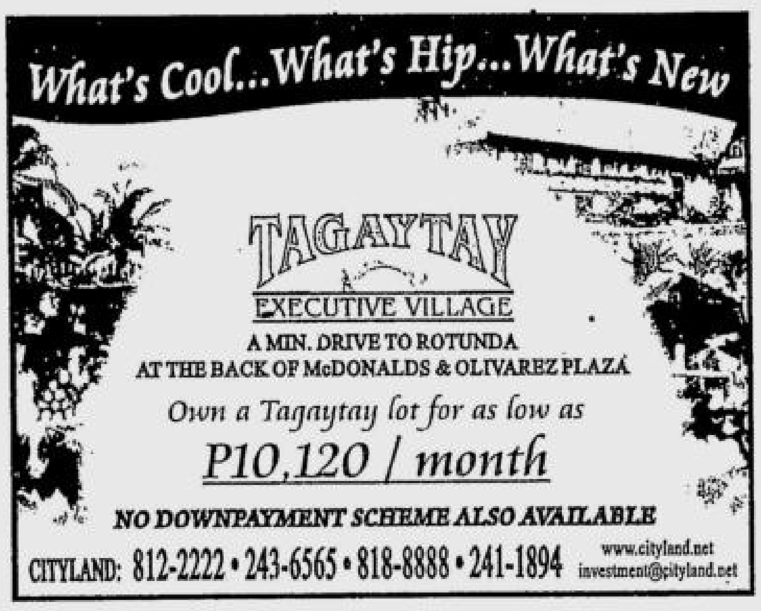

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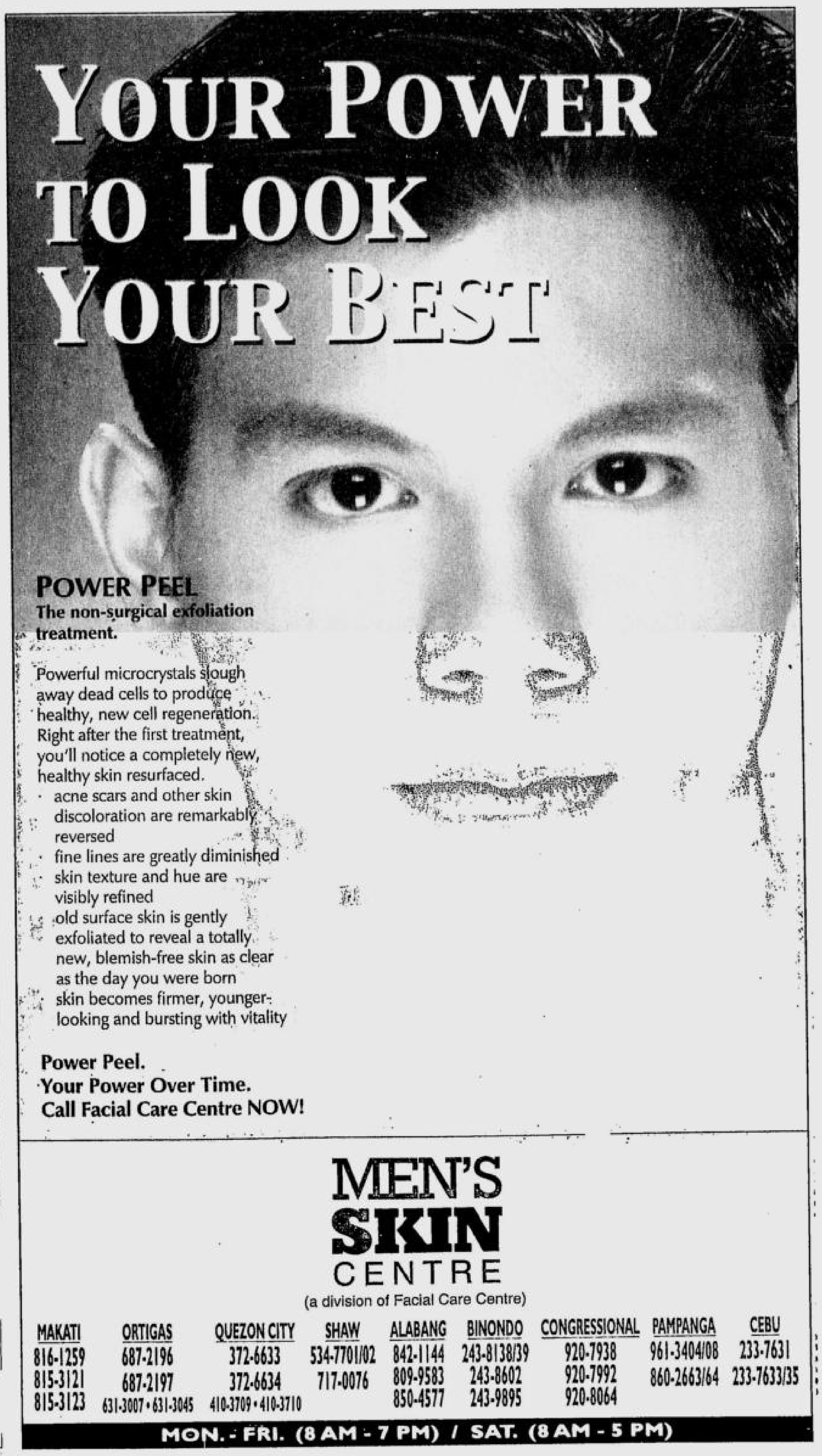

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INQ7.net marks second year, 26.4M pageviews

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INQ7.net, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA 7's news website, registered a total of 26,469,494 pageviews last month on an in-house electronic tracking system. The website marks only its second anniversary today.

The tracking system showed that Breaking News, Nation, Entertainment, Editorial and Opinion and Lifestyle were the most visited sections, with pageviews ranging from a low of 1,473,858 for Lifestyle to 3,884,418 for the text-and-video combined Breaking News.

Nation, which carries the Inquirer's top stories, drew 3,609,144 visits; Entertainment, 2,528,778; and Editorial and Opinion, 2,145,173. The next top four were Sports, 1,429,979; Metro, 1,408,758; Regions, 1,236, 113; and Infotech, 1,118,70.

The number of "unique" visitors also increased from 525,130 in June 2002 to 705,619 in January 2003. "Unique" visitors are traceable through their Internet Protocol (IP) or the electronic identification of the computer used to log on.

"These figures reveal an astounding growth in just two years," said Javier Vicente D. Rufino, editor in chief. "This shows that, to some people, INQ7.net has already become a habit—like reading the newspaper or watching TV, or listening to the radio."

Also Rufino reported, a total of 15,000 visitors had signed up for the Discussion group, "a virtual Plaza Miranda of lively debate, complete with some virtual tomato-pelting," on burning issues. "Remember l'affaire Kris-Joey last year? That was pure online discussion stuff."

Also revealed were the reading preferences of Filipinos, "wherever they may be," Rufino said. In-house tracking showed that 58.82 percent of INQ7.net registered users resided in the Philippines, and 20.77 percent in the United States. The rest were distributed across 43 countries, including Afghanistan and Israel.

Specific stories stood out, obviously for appealing to the Filipinos' greatest hopes, fears, and desires.

A Breaking News report on a pray-over in Malacañang for the President's health and peace of mind (Jan. 3, 2003) attracted heavy readership, as did the story on a VHS tape that showed alleged Moro rebels beheading a male captive (Feb. 23, 2002).

The landmark case of a Filipina who defied deportation from the US (Jan. 19, 2003) caused a traffic jam of users, possibly Filipinos faced with a similar dilemma.

Stories about sexy movie stars Aubrey Miles (Sept. 27, 2002), Maui Taylor (April 6, 2002) and Diana Zubiri (Nov. 21, 2002) also ranked high among the readers.

INQ7.net usage was particularly high in June due to the anti-Abu Sayyaf operations, and again in October, when a series of bombings rocked Manila and several cities in Mindanao.

Rufino concluded that, for news about home, Filipinos abroad have apparently turned to INQ7.net.

Transfer of 1st PC chief's remains hits snag–twice

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE officials want to transfer the remains of their "grand old chief," Brig. Gen. Rafael Crame, to the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Makati City.

There's just one hitch: cemetery caretakers are requiring a certificate of his death 75 years ago, and neither the police nor Crame's relatives have a copy.

Crame was the first Filipino head of the Philippine Constabulary, precursor of today's Philippine National Police, a post he served from 1917 until he passed away in 1927. He was buried at the La Loma cemetery in Quezon City.

Deputy Director General Virtus Gil of the PNP Directorial Staff yesterday said he was hoping the requirement could be waived.

Natividad Crame-Rogers had written PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. a few weeks ago, requesting the transfer of her great-grandfather's remains to the camp named after him along Edsa in Quezon City. She specified the spot–the foot of Crame's monument at a rotunda inside the camp. Police officials suggested the Libingan as a better option, and Rogers agreed.

Until the matter of the death certificate is settled, the police have another snag to iron out. Rogers' request is apparently not endorsed by the whole clan. Another great-granddaughter, Conchita Crame-Uy, called a radio station to say her family would never permit the transfer.

"The whole Crame clan is in La Loma–my father, my uncle, they're all there," she told Radio dzBB.

Rafael Crame, born Oct. 2, 1863 in Rizal, rose from the ranks and became the first Filipino to occupy a position held by American generals for 16 years, according to the book "Konstable: The Story of the Philippine Constabulary."

Under his watch in 1918, PC troops neutralized bands of outlaws in Mindanao. Early the following year, he played a big role in suppressing a massive labor strike dubbed "Manila Mutiny." For this Gov. Gen. Francis Harrison wanted to reward him with the Medal of Valor, the highest honor for an officer. Crame declined the award, saying "I only did my duty."

Rep. A. Abaya; 68

ABAYA

REP. Antonio Abaya, chair of the House ethics committee, died Wednesday at the age of 68.

Congressmen mourned the death of the Isabela representative whom they described as one of the more conscientious members of the House.

A House statement said Abaya had been confined at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City since Feb. 12 but there was no official word on the cause of his death.

Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez and Western Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura, Abaya's closest colleagues, said he was operated on for a brain tumor in December.

"He'd been sick since he was operated on but he was attending sessions afterward," Gonzalez said.

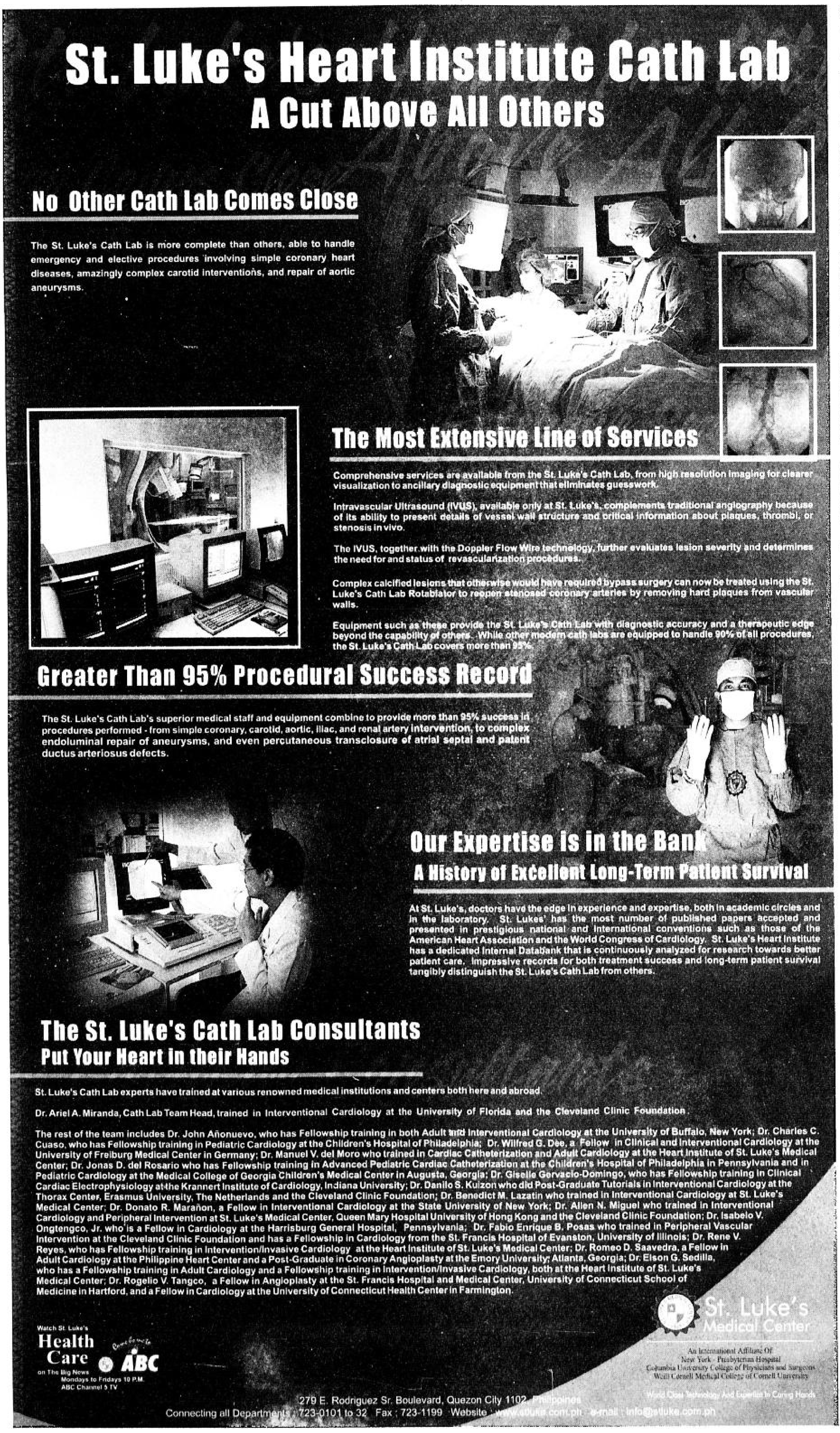
Nachura said he was undersecretary of education when he met Abaya because the congressman was very concerned about education bills.

"He was a very good man. He was very sober in analyzing problems," Nachura said.

Born on Aug. 30, 1934 in Santiago City, Abaya is survived by his wife, Dr. Asuncion Tayag Navarro, and children Antonio Jr., Ann and Alvin.

Abaya was first elected representative of Isabela's fourth district in 1987. In 1998, he lost the mayoral elections in Santiago City, his hometown, to Joel Miranda. In 2001, he ran again for Congress and regained the fourth district seat.

Abaya obtained his law degree from the University of the Philippines in 1956. He was municipal secretary under Santiago Mayor Raymundo Miranda from 1960 to 1963. In 1964, he was elected vice mayor and from 1972 to 1986, he was mayor of Santiago. *Juliet L. Javellana and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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To stop crime, cops propose new academy

By TJ Burgonio

STILL reeling from President Macapagal-Arroyo's rebuke for their failure to check street crimes, police officials yesterday announced plans to build another training academy that would enhance basic police skills in conducting investigations and arrests, even managing traffic and checkpoints.

Deputy Director General Virtus Gil, chief of the Philippine National Police Directorial Staff, said the four-year course at the PNP Academy does not include these skills.

"I can't say that the course at the police academy is sufficient," Gil told reporters. "It only produces graduates for commissioning in the PNP."

Likewise, he said, the basic recruitment course at the Philippine National Training Institute (PNTI) was wanting.

The proposed new institute, Gil said, would train policemen who have experience "on the beat," not fresh graduates or fresh recruits.

"They need enhancement of intervention skills, such as how to conduct arrests, checkpoints and crime scene investigations, as well as cracking cyber crimes, and even managing traffic," he said.

Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., PNP chief, has "agreed in principle" to the proposal, Gil said. "We hope he can work for the immediate release of funds," he added, estimating that the physical structure alone would cost at least P10 million.

The plan is to set up the academy within the year in Camp Crame, Quezon City at the former headquarters of the defunct Narcotics Group.

Last week, Ms Macapagal chided police officials for their failure to stem the rising incidence of street crimes in Metro Manila and other urban areas.

Yesterday, she conducted a surprise inspection of Station 2 in Moriones, Tondo, which covers an area with one of the highest crime rates. The station is under Supt. Elmer Jamias.

With the President were Malacañang chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao, Press Secretary Hernani Braganza and his undersecretaries Ching Suva and Rocky Nazareno. *With Carlito Pablo*

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Recto: Debt service payment in nat'l budget really P425B

By Cynthia D. Balana

ACTUAL debt service allocation in the national budget is not P223.2 billion but P425.7 billion, Sen. Ralph Recto said yesterday.

This year's total debt service—principal and interest payments—increased by P14.3 billion, from P411.4 billion to P425.7 billion, a fact not reflected in the budget bill, Recto pointed out.

Recto said the original amount of P223.2 billion for interest payments of government debts for this year was based on a P51.50 to $1 exchange rate.

But last month, he said, the Department of Finance had "thrown in the towel" by raising the amount of interest payments to P230.7 billion. The adjustment by the DOF was premised on a P53:$1 exchange rate.

"At the very least, we will be paying P7.5 billion more, and that is for interest alone," he said.

Recto said the amount for principal amortization, which was originally pegged at P188.2 billion for this year, was not indicated in the national budget as it was deemed an off-budget item. Unfortunately, he said, this has gone up to P195 billion.

Recto said the increase in the debt service was due partly to the slide of the peso against the greenback. This year, the government is committed to pay $1.436 billion in interest payments and $1.682 billion in principal amortization.

"If the peso will slide to $54 to a US dollar, interest and principal payments will go up by P3.12 billion, and if it deteriorates to P55 to a dollar, then the government will have to cough up an additional P6.24 billion," the senator said.

He said a one-peso depreciation against the dollar would increase the debt service by P3.12 billion.

The debt service amount of P425.7 billion is more than 50 percent of the P804.2 billion "survival budget" approved by the Senate earlier.

Because of this, Senate President Franklin Drilon proposed a cap on government borrowing.

Drilon filed Senate Bill 2405, or the Debt Cap Act, to ensure that debt service payments are affordable within the context of budget priorities.

"The national government debt has been alarmingly increasing these past few years. In 2001, the national government debt was estimated at P2.88 trillion or 79 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and in 2003, this could reach P3.2 trillion," he said.

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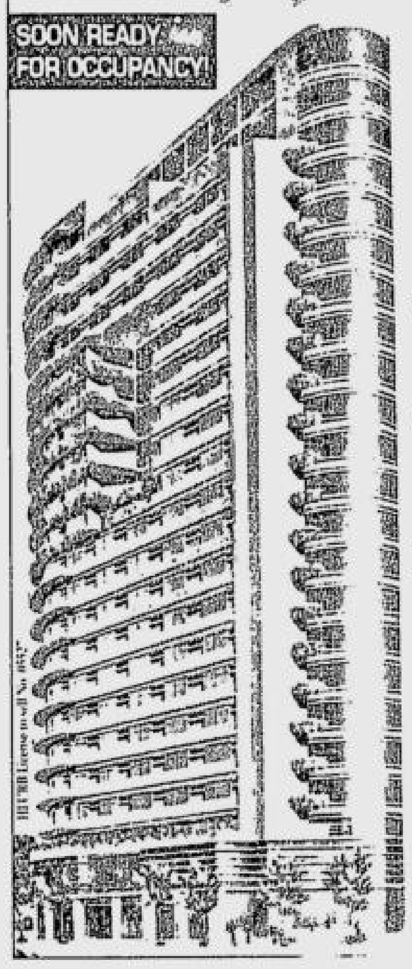

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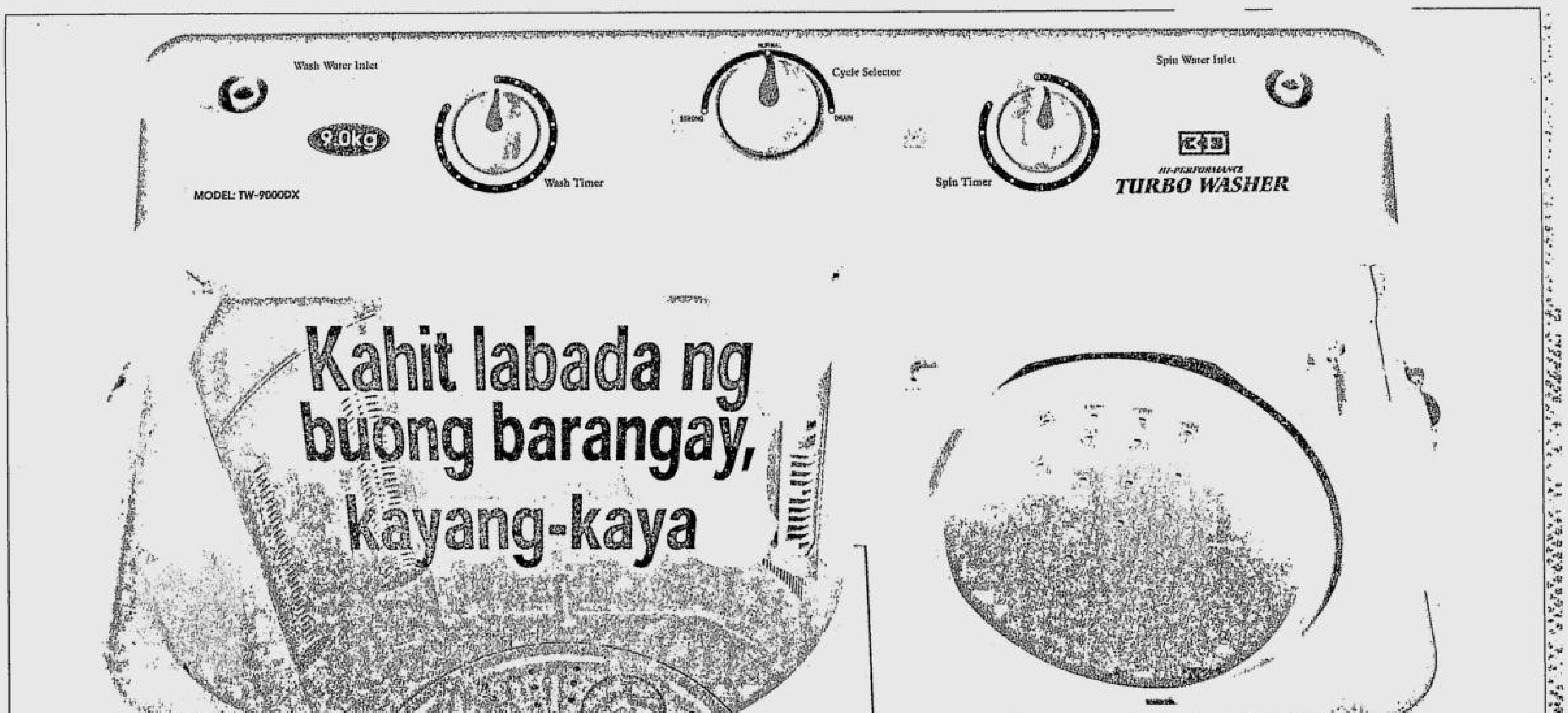

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OPINION

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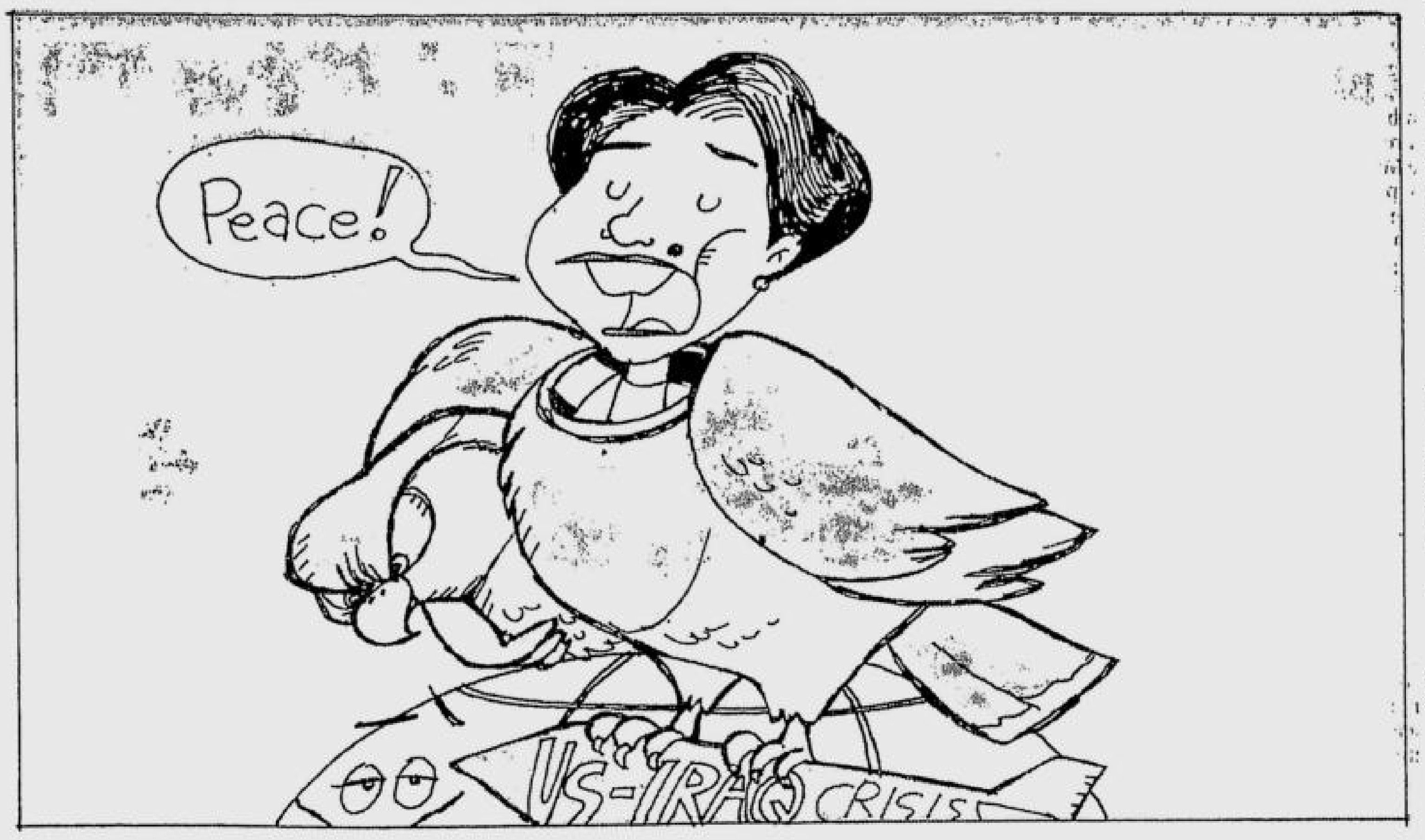

Still a pariah

EDITORIAL

THE PHILIPPINES narrowly avoided isolation in the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Kuala Lumpur last Monday when President Macapagal-Arroyo made a nimble rhetorical shift on Iraq. Speaking before 114 NAM members, most of which are poor countries, the President discarded a tough stance on Iraq hewing close to the US war policy, and went along with the anti-war tide in NAM.

The President appealed to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq to step up cooperation with United Nations arms inspectors by showing them suspected sites of weapons of mass destruction. She urged Saddam to seek a "win-win settlement" with the UN to spare his people the "agonies of a devastating war."

Her statement at NAM dropped the tough line she had taken before she flew to the summit. She had earlier pressed Iraq to disarm and asked the UN to act with "dispatch and force" should Iraq fail to cooperate fully with the UN inspectors. This position echoed Washington's line which insists that Iraq has failed to disarm in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1441.

Ms Macapagal's statement, however, fell short of the more balanced consensus at NAM calling not only on Iraq to cooperate more fully with the inspectors in disarming but also on the Security Council to give more time for inspections. She sought refuge behind the message of UN Secretary General Koffi Anan who emphatically asked Iraq to "disarm" and cooperate "fully and proactively" with UN inspectors, while noting that the inspections were showing results and should therefore be allowed to continue "until all weapons of mass destruction are destroyed and accounted for." Although the President shed her hawkish feathers, she did not take the equidistant and balanced position expressed by the NAM communiqué.

Ms Macapagal apparently changed her tune to avoid being out of step with the anti-war majority sentiment at NAM where the United States came under scathing attacks from a number of African and Arab delegates. Her rather ambivalent statement underlined the Philippine balancing act at NAM where, since it was founded in the 1950s during the Cold War, the Philippines has never been at home in ideological terms. During the Cold War, the non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa took a middle ground between the Western and the Eastern blocs, in an effort not only to avoid being caught in the vise of their conflict but also to blunt the edges of their confrontation.

In its present enlarged composition of 116 nations, NAM members comprise 55 percent of the world's population and hold nearly two-thirds of the UN General Assembly seats. Six NAM nations hold seats as non-permanent members of the Security Council.

The United States and Britain are lobbying for a second Security Council resolution warning that the moment has come to make a decision on the enforcement of Resolution 1441. The United States has warned that if the Iraqis "don't comply, then serious consequences will flow."

The votes of NAM members in the council cannot be ignored in determining whether the US-British draft resolution will overcome the solid opposition put up by three veto-wielding members—France, Russia and China—all of which have supported the move to give more time for inspections.

The Philippines was put in a bind at NAM. Its dilemma is that while it is the staunchest supporter of the Bush war policy on Iraq among the Southeast Asian countries, it cannot swim against the stream of Asian, as well as NAM, sentiment antagonistic to the US war policy.

At the same time, the Philippines is caught in the storm of domestic public opinion against Washington's plans to deploy 1,700 troops for combat duty in Sulu to help the Filipino armed forces disrupt and destroy the Abu Sayyaf which the United States has tagged as linked to al-Qaida terrorist networks.

This new deployment opens an active front in the US-led war on terrorism as it builds up its forces for an imminent war on Iraq.

The Philippines' dilemma relative to NAM will not go away after the Kuala Lumpur summit. The President's ambivalent statement merely blurred our isolation. We remain a pariah in the NAM.

Why traffic is a mess in Metro Manila

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

DANTE Lantin, chief of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), reacted to our Feb. 18 column about "too many buses on Edsa." His reaction, published yesterday in the "Letters" section, said the LTFRB stopped accepting franchise applications for buses in Metro Manila since 1996, and that eight to 10 years ago, there were 8,000 buses on Edsa, and "now there are only 3,000." Then he proceeded to contradict himself when he added that in the early 1990s, "the LTFRB had to implement the 'easy entry' policy of the DOTC in public transportation, which paved the way for the franchising of more PUVs. The 'easy entry' or liberalization policy was a condition for a foreign-funded project which in fact paved the way for the entry of used buses into the country."

So Mr. Lantin, are there too many buses on Edsa or not? Maybe your records show otherwise, but if you spare a minute to look out your office window, you would see those buses crawling bumper-to-bumper on Edsa. It is like that from Monumento to Baclaran, in case you don't know. Where did all those buses come from? There were not that many buses eight or 10 years ago.

They are *colorum* buses, is the usual answer. So what is the LTFRB doing to these *colorums*? They are violating the law and should be stopped.

"We have no law enforcement powers," Lantin says, "the power to apprehend and impound being lodged in the LTO and the MMDA."

So I repeat, what is the LTFRB doing? The LTO and the MMDA are sister government agencies. Has the LTFRB asked them to crack down on *colorums*? He agrees that all government agencies must help solve the traffic problems of Metro Manila. So shouldn't he ask these other government agencies, and his superior, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, to crack down on *colorums*?

Lantin also denies that the fare rates the LTFRB approved are too high. "Commuters have not complained that fares set are high while transport operators have always assailed the new fares as inadequate."

Something must be wrong with his hearing. He hears the complaints of transport operators but not of commuters. Maybe it is because the commuters are not organized like the transport operators whose association is headed by a pretty ex-singer who is always in media.

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say. If the fare rates are inadequate, as the operators claim, how come there are still so many of them operating despite the lack of passengers? And why are *colorum* buses flocking to the Edsa route if it is not profitable? Isn't it logical that they would shift to more profitable routes if Edsa is not? The fact that they're still bumper-to-bumper on Edsa even if each unit has only a few passengers can lead to only one conclusion: the bus companies still make money.

When the government decided to build the Metrorail on Edsa, it was because the thoroughfare was clogged with buses and traffic had been reduced to a crawl. It was to give the hordes of passengers an alternative: a fast rail system above the traffic. It was thought that as more passengers shifted to the Metrorail, the buses would thin out. It was thought unnecessary to ban buses from Edsa; attrition would take care of that.

They thought wrong. The number of buses did not decrease. On the contrary, they seem to have increased tremendously. And yet Lantin claims the buses on Edsa have decreased from 8,000 to only 3,000. Lantin is not only deaf, he is also blind. Are there only 3,000 buses filling two lanes of Edsa from Monumento to Baclaran?

Colorums? Apprehend them. They violate the law. Government agencies like the LTFRB are supposed to enforce the law at all times, not look for excuses not to do it.

* * *

The solution to Metro Manila's traffic mess is not gimmicks like color-coding or number-coding. It is the strict enforcement of traffic laws and rules. If *colorums* are *bawal*, don't allow them on the streets. If blocking intersections is *bawal*, apprehend vehicles that block intersections. If stopping inside the yellow boxes is *bawal*, apprehend vehicles that are caught there. If the sign says "No Loading/Unloading" and the jeepney or bus stops near it for passengers, arrest the driver. If commuters wait for rides on the street, not on the sidewalk, and away from the loading/unloading zones, arrest them because they tempt PUV drivers into violating the law.

But sometimes policemen, even when they see traffic rules being violated with impunity, don't do anything to arrest the drivers or even just to warn them, especially if the latter are PUV drivers. It is either they're too lazy or they have a modus vivendi with the drivers' association.

When the government built a Police Community Center under the Commonwealth-Tandang Sora flyover, the people thought traffic and street vending in the area would finally be put in order. No such thing happened. Every day, there are many policemen inside and outside the center. They are always lounging on chairs outside. Patrol cars and motorcycles are parked outside.

But passengers still wait for rides in front of the, "No Loading/Unloading" signs, and buses and jeepneys still stop there and block the intersection to pick them up. The policemen can see them from where they sit, but do they bother to do anything about it? Like Dante Lantin, they behave as though they were deaf and blind.

That is why traffic is a mess in Metro Manila.

What's wrong with the picture?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE AFP report goes: "The United States warned that it would give the United Nations a last chance on Iraq, insisting Sunday that the time had come to take action against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Washington would give the body less than two months to pass a fresh resolution to be unveiled next week and clearing the way for war," George Bush said. "Time is short. This is the chance for the Security Council to show its relevance, and I believe the Security Council will show its relevance because Saddam Hussein has not disarmed," he said at his Texas ranch.

What's wrong with that picture? Very simply, it's the tail wagging the dog.

Yet such has the world become, with its Alice-in-Wonderland inversion of the normal course of human affairs, that a report like this takes on an absurd rationality. What would in fact be rational is a report that says:

"The United Nations warned that it would give the United States a last chance on Iraq, insisting Sunday that the time had come to take action against US President George Bush. The body would give Washington less than two months to comply with its resolutions, which state there is need to pursue the process of inspection and disarmament, and pave the way for peace, Koffi Anan said. "There is no time left. This is the chance for George Bush to show his relevance, and I believe the American people will compel him to do it because they themselves are protesting his war," he said from his UN office.

The words "unilateralism," "bullying" and "double standard" do not even come close to capturing the extent of George Bush's and Donald Rumsfeld's (never mind Tony Blair, he's just the American poodle, as someone called him) delusions. This is not arrogance, this is insanity. It's not just a mistaken reading of the state of the world, as the American media suggest, this is a pathological imposition of a Walt Disney cartoon on reality. But I insult Walt Disney cartoons, which have infinitely more truth in them than Bush's and Rumsfeld's notions, such as they may be called even that.

Fortunately, their topsy-turvy view of the world has not gone unchallenged. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, host of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, spoke not just for the developing nations but for the whole world when he pointed to the real threat facing it today. That was not Iraq, he said, that was the United States. Since 9/11, he said, the powerful countries were spearheading "a revival of the old European habit of working to dominate the world." That "invariably involves injustice and oppression of people of other ethnic origins and colors. It is no longer just a war against terrorism. It is in fact a war to dominate the world, i.e. the chromatically different world."

As to GMA, well, I don't know where else her speech landed other than in local media; there can't be too many people interested in her opinion. What an embarrassment to the nation, the nation of Claro M. Recto, Jose W. Diokno and Lorenzo Tañada! All she could do was call on Saddam Hussein to make a win-win decision and do as she does, which is to run as fast as legs would carry when the United States says, "Fetch!" It only reminded me of how she became President, which was to avoid flak by avoiding principle. She couldn't even stick to her gung-ho posturing. What can I say? *Nabakla*. But I insult my gay friends, men and women, who have infinitely more balls than this.

But what's wrong with this picture? Or with what GMA said? Very simply it's just the tail wagging, never mind the dog.

But such has this government become, with its Nightmare-on-Elm-Street reduction of the normal course of national affairs, that a message like this takes on an absurd rationality. What would in fact be rational is a Filipino President saying:

George Bush should offer a win-win formula by cooperating with the United Nations. If he does so, he will be recognized, if not as a wise leader—he can never be that, having dragged the world through this nightmare—at least as one who still has a shred of decency left in him. It's not only that the United Nations has determined that Iraq can be made to destroy whatever weapons of mass destruction it has by world pressure, it is also that the United States itself is guilty of the crimes it is accusing others of. It has weapons of mass destruction, the most in the world. It has not only threatened to use them, it has used them. It is not alone in Iraq that there's a tyranny, there's one in America itself, a wave of inquisition not unlike the one that hit in during the McCarthy period. Yet who will declare war on America to disarm it, usher in regime change, and secure all of humanity?

Ariel Sharon should offer a win-win formula by cooperating with the Arab world, specifically with Palestine. If he does so, he will be recognized, if not as a reasonable leader (too late for that) at least as not a completely bloodthirsty one. Israel has weapons of mass destruction, more than Iraq. It has not only threatened a genocidal war, it has done it, not least in recent years. You cannot find a more totalitarian rule right now than Sharon's. Yet who will declare war on Israel to disarm it, usher in regime change and secure all of humanity?

GMA herself should offer a win-win formula by vacating Malacañang right here, right now. This government has not been deterred from destroying massively for lack of weapons of mass destruction. Look what GMA has done to Mindanao, turning a land that flowed with milk and honey into one that flows with blood and gore. Look at what she is doing to the country, turning the Pearl of the Orient to the pariah of the world. Yet who will declare war on GMA, usher in regime change and secure what's left of the nation?

Well, we all should.

Culprit: US 'Freedom Fund'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

INFORMED sources say that the discrepancy between Washington's understanding of the role of the US forces that are to be deployed in Sulu and that of Manila, which is now generating a lot of angst among the militant elements here, may be traced to the Freedom Fund set up by the US Congress right after the Sept. 11, 2001 bombings to combat international terrorism. It seems that funding for the coming Balikatan exercises in Sulu are going to come from this fund and not from the Mutual Defense Treaty. To qualify for this, US troops sent abroad have to assume combat roles, otherwise the Bush administration would have a problem. This interpretation of combat for the US troops, however, is creating a problem for the Macapagal administration.

* * *

Sen. Edgardo Angara was recently quoted as saying that before the Senate will act on amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law (Amla), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) must first show how the 29 subscribing countries are complying with its conditions. That is logical, except that Angara and the 11 other senators against Amla amendments should have first looked into how the other countries complied during the two years that Congress has been deliberating on the Amla. Common sense dictates this.

* * *

Star columnist Boo Chanco said the same thing yesterday when he quoted a "pretty respectable congressman" admitting that such comparative research was not done because "we don't have facilities and funds for research." The lawmaker admitted that they "depended on bits and pieces of information they hear about or read about on what Thailand did and on how Switzerland is getting away with it."

Such shoddy study given to a crucial law such as Amla, which affects our international financial standing, is hard to imagine. The problem is that the senators are currently so hyped up over the USAID-funded research group, Agile, whose alleged interference in government policy formulation they have been hitting. They ignore the fact that if they fail to meet the March 15 FATF deadline, it could ruin such things as the letters of credit of exporters.

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sergio Ortiz-Luis recently warned that undelivered shipments of our $350-million exports arising from complications in the processing of documents could easily reach 10 percent, wiping out the export sector's targeted growth this year. And yet the senators, nine of whom are in the opposition, would rather blame Agile for their failure with Amla. No wonder some quarters are saying they are out to sabotage the economy and/or protect their fat bank accounts.

* * *

I'm sure it's not the lack of funds that prevents Congress from authorizing competent research, but funds misused on wrong priorities. If Congress would bare its budget to the scrutiny of media, this will be borne out.

Another reason the Senate has been unable to give serious treatment to Amla has been the instability there, the constant jockeying for leadership, the coups and the bickering.

Ironically, the senators are denouncing Agile as a powerful lobby group out to subvert RP sovereignty when, as US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone pointed out, Agile has been supplying the critical research work and study conducted by Filipinos with Ph.D.s, to back up various legislative measures as well as the executive departments. Aside from the spade work on Amla, I understand that Agile also provided research studies for such far-reaching measures such as the Bangko Sentral Act, the power laws like Epira and the E-Procurement Law.

* * *

Meeting with media women some weeks back, Interior Secretary Jose Lina pointed out that one factor adversely affecting the performance of the Philippine National Police is that there are only 15,000 policemen for the Metro Manila area with its 11 million population. This ratio of one policeman to 738 people is a far cry from the ideal. Lina stressed, however, that the DILG and PNP try to make up for it with more professional training.

He is also proud of the fact that even while the government had to realign scarce resources to cope with the terrorism phenomenon after Sept. 11, 2001, except for the Kidapawan bombing episode, the Christmas holidays and World Meeting of Families came and went without any untoward incidents. Of course this was before hostilities flared up anew in Central Mindanao. Lina, who also serves as officer in charge of the Dangerous Drugs Board, is also proud of the PNP's performance in the fight against drugs, citing the dismantling of four big shabu factories last year. But he concedes that the fight against drugs is "far from over."

* * *

Shifting to his other hat, that of the overseer of the local government units, Lina is proud of the DILG's record as No. 1 in saving government funds under the E-Procurement Law. He also stressed that there has never been a President "as LGU-friendly" as Ms Macapagal-Arroyo. He explained that GMA paid the back accounts of Internal Revenue Allotments (IRA) of past presidents and that while she has been stringent with the national government, "*bukas na bukas ang palad* with the LGUs."

The media women wanted to know who are the "*sikat* governors," and he quipped, "*Dati ako ang sikat sa mga iyan*," pointing out that during his two terms as Laguna governor, he increased the real property tax collections from P374 million to P1.8 billion in five years.

Who are the "*sikat* mayors?" Lina said there are many, among them Tagaytay's Francis Tolentino, Muntinlupa's Jaime Fresnedi, Naga's Jess Robredo and, yes, even Manila's Mayor Lito Atienza. (If the last would stop concreting all the green spaces in the city, I wanted to add.)

The invisible poor

COMMENTARY

Lourdes Didith V. Mendoza
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THERE are those of us who aim for things beyond today, beyond this year or many years from now. But there are also those who merely aim for nothing more than a mouthful come next mealtime.

In Metro Manila, these two types of people coexist. Side by side, the haves and the have-nots go their own ways with their own ways of living, aiming for different things.

The poor have always been with us, and one need not look too far to see the overwhelming squalor in our metropolis. Wedged between buildings, sitting on river banks, crammed between middle-class villages are excuses for houses where our poor live.

We also see the poor on the streets, in churches, or in parks where they gather to beg for alms. They are everywhere, yet they have become invisible; they have become part of the cityscape.

There's a need to remind each one of us of their presence, especially during these times when the general concerns of society are scattered among the threat of war, insurgencies and the coming presidential elections. It seems as if the players in all these absurd theaters of violence and political mayhem have forgotten or completely ignore the poor who would reel under the slightest impact. Yet they seem bent on getting what they want without thought of those who would needlessly suffer or die in silence in the process.

Things are getting worse for the poor. The National Economic and Development Authority recently reported that consumer prices edged up by 2.6 percent last January due to higher oil prices, higher power and water rates and the weakening peso. The military also reported that our country could be fair game to terrorist sympathy attacks if war breaks out in the Middle East, while the jobs of more than one million Filipinos hang by a thread.

Struggling to survive amid all this is a huge number of Filipinos experiencing hunger. According to a recent Social Weather Stations survey, at least half a million households experience severe hunger often, and 1.3 million households experience moderate hunger on a regular basis. This does not include the growing number of homeless people and children on the streets.

Yet these numbers mean nothing if they do not move people toward positive action. One sometimes has to see for herself or himself the face of poverty. One of the images that sharply evokes the idea of poverty in our country is this: a huddled community of shanties, all bent together under the strain of sun and rain, the people hungry from want of food, yet still feisty enough to wage war against the elements, manmade or otherwise. But this picture has failed to capture the attention of those who can change it. The faces of the poor beg for attention, especially now, when various threats external to them further compound the threat of eviction in their own land. Survival has never been this hard for the common folk.

Urban poor residents in Metro Manila, at least those we have spoken with, said that life is indeed difficult. Some even said that they believe, now more than ever, that there must really be a heaven, since hell is already here on earth. Their candid responses reflect their pain, which is the running background of their lives. Hence, there are no lofty goals, just lofty and unreachable dreams.

Since deprivation has taken up all the spaces in their lives, their goals have become very realistic. Their aim, they said, is simple. It is surviving the day. While rain blows on them from different sides, and with nothing else to hold on to, they hang on to a dear faith that promises a life better than this one.

In the meantime, they sleep on empty stomachs. With no security to speak of, or with nothing to look forward to, they dream.

The poor dream of a time when they have enough money in their pockets to feed six children, and still enough left over to send them to school in decent clothes. The poor dream of a time when they are secure enough to build roots on a land they can legally call their own. They dream of a time when they can do business without fear of getting their wares soaked by kerosene, or of being mauled or harassed by over-eager police or MMDA officials.

Upon waking up, however, they can only aim for a mouthful come next mealtime.

But for those of us who have the luxury of aiming for far-reaching goals, it is necessary that we include the poor in our vision. Those of us who are better off often forget that most things that cause undue suffering to the underprivileged are instigated by us. Often, poverty worsens because of the acts of man, or because of their inaction.

Two brave people, two blazing trails

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WE said goodbye last week and this week to two great Filipinos, who passed on to the Great Beyond. The loss was heavy on the heart, a fellow journalist said, and I agreed. We have been wake-hopping. A sinking feeling, if one allows it, could pull one down. Fortunately, I have a fair amount of serotonin—a blessing indeed—that keeps me up. This does not mean pain is a stranger; I am no stranger to pain.

But despite the loss, there was also a reason to celebrate, to celebrate the lives of two brave and exceptional people. Human rights lawyer Augusto "Bobbit" Sanchez, 70, and overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) rights advocate Gina Alunan-Melgar, 44. Both left blazing trails for many to follow.

Bobbit. I was the last person who should have been made to stand before a crowd to say something about Bobbit. I cannot claim a very personal friendship with Bobbit. Fellow INQUIRER columnist Conrad de Quiros and Sen. Joker Arroyo, the two other speakers, knew him much better. But the Women Writers in Media Now (Women), of which I am a part, thought I should be the one to say something on behalf of our group and for myself.

Flashback. Women was a loose group of writers who stuck together during the martial law years for reasons of survival, and friendship as well. We were an endangered species. The Marcos military was breathing down our necks and survival meant sticking together, looking out for one another, reaching out to other sectors like lawyers, church people and the *masa*. The way victims of human rights violations also reached out to lawyers and writers—us.

That was how the path of the bold and daring Mabini lawyers and the path of the bold and reckless women writers crossed. Oh, but our paths crossed often, on the bloodied fields and mountains—the lawyers in search of the truth, we, the writers, also in search of the truth a bloody good story to tell.

When time came for the writers to be lined up, tormented, taunted and interrogated by Fabian Ver's men, these brave lawyers in shining armor came. Bobbit was one of those who came to our aid. It was in his posh office in Makati that we sought refuge and plotted our legal moves. I'll never forget that office. That time I had to go from one law office to another to get papers, signatures, etc. Bobbit's office was in Makati, Joker's was in Escolta, Rene Saguisag's was a hole-in-the-wall in Quiapo at that time. I was so impressed. Bobbit and a battery of lawyers went with us to the Supreme Court to seek relief. We were front-page story. The military backed off. But only for a while. Next thing we knew, they were going to make my case a trial balloon and a P10-million libel suit was filed against me. I was arraigned.

To make a long story short, things got overtaken by events. Edsa People Power 1986 happened and the rest is history. But the proof of Bobbit's role in the women writers' lives is in my files and in my memory. He was part of the battles that we fought and won.

Gina. OFWs and NGO workers will truly miss Gina who dedicated more than 20 years of her life to the cause of OFWs, particularly the women. Gina worked in Hong Kong from 1980 to 1985, playing the role of consummate "*yaya*" and "*katulong*" of Filipino domestic helpers who needed help. There she organized the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers and the Union of Filipinos. A cancer threat brought her home in 1986. Gina recovered, got married and started Kaibigan, Friends of the Filipino Migrant Workers. She became the executive director of Kanlungan Center from 1989 to 1996, after which she joined the Asian Center for Women's Human Rights.

Many of my stories on OFWs came to life because of my association with Gina and Kanlungan. I could run there for anything: statistics, background information, families I needed to find, stories that were either tragic or happy, etc.

I got to know Gina more during the preparations for the War Crimes Tribunal held in Tokyo in December 2000 where Asian "comfort women," all in the sunset of their lives, went to testify on the sexual abuses of the Japanese military during World War II. A whole bunch of us—women writers, women lawyers—bonded in Tokyo.

Two years ago, Gina founded Atikha Inc. and co-founded Balikabayani, NGOs that serve OFWs and their families through livelihood and savings programs as well as counseling and education. Their goal: reintegration of OFWs into their families and communities. One of the fruits of this endeavor was the groundbreaking book "Coming Home." Again, Gina drew me in.

Gina finished college in Maryknoll and her master's at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, with the Magna Carta on Migrant Workers as the subject of her thesis.

Two years ago, after 12 years, Gina's illness recurred. Doctors gave her six months but she fought valiantly and graciously, continuing her work till the end.

Good riddance. Award-winning poet and playwright Joi Barrios read this poem, "Yankee Doodle Goes to War," in several literary events in the United States. She is at present a visiting professor at the University of California in Irvine. Excerpts:

Pilipina ako/ At sa bayan ko ngayon/ Tatlong libong Amerikanong sundalo ang naroon./ Ito ang awit ko/ awit ng pagkutya, hinagpis at pagtawag.

Yankee doodle came to town/ Riding on a pony/ Killed and maimed and tortured us/ And called it a…democracy.

Yankee doodle keep it up,/ Yankee doodle dandy,/Burn the village and the town,/ And with your gun be handy…

Amerika, Amerika./Patungo ka na naman sa digma, Amerika./ Ipinagpalit ang dugo sa langis./Ang bayan ko'y hindi palaruan/ Ng iyong mga tanke't sundalo…

Layas, Amerika,/ Sa aking bayan lumayas.
Leave my country, leave.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

'Rido'

AFTER WATCHING an "I-witness" documentary on *rido* (family or clan wars), it dawned on me that it would somehow validate the common perception that Muslims are war freaks. Sad, but true and that we have continuously avoided confronting the fact that this practice is a liability for us Muslims. Indeed, the *rido* is one big roadblock to development in Mindanao.

YOUNG BLOOD

Gonaranao B. Musor

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

When I was about to enroll in Grade 6, our family moved to Iligan City from Manila. Soon we found ourselves in the middle of a *rido*, pitting my mother's relatives against another Maranao family. If I am not mistaken, a relative had killed a member of the other family. Luckily for us, the other family only sought revenge against my older male relatives. To ensure his own safety, an uncle of mine (a first cousin of my mom) had to transfer from Iligan to Cagayan de Oro City, which was farther from Marawi City.

When I first heard about the *rido*, my immediate reaction was to ask why they didn't just let the police take away the guilty relative and let the courts do their job. My dad responded that leaving the problem to the police and the justice system was not enough to assuage the "*maratabat*" of the affected family.

My young mind could not understand why people would take the law into their own hands. Even more puzzling for me was how *maratabat* got into all of this. *Maratabat*, I would later learn, was a complex concept involving pride, honor and dignity. "Kill one of us and you trample upon our *maratabat*," the old folks would say. "It is this same *maratabat* that will drive us to seek vengeance."

It strikes me as ironic that the Maranaos who regard the practice of law as one of the most prestigious professions, cannot trust our legal system to perform its function. It is even more ironic that the same people who subscribe to the beliefs of Islam, whose root word means "peace," are the ones most often accused of disrupting it.

One casualty of this culture of violence was Jay Llamas, an Ateneo law graduate who was killed during an altercation over a traffic accident. If the account of witnesses are true, the alleged killer, Bashir Abdulrahman, was provoked by Llamas to shoot.

This incident prompted Prof. Taha Basman of the Philippine Islamic Council, to explain or warn others not to dare a Muslim. "When a Muslim draws, he shoots!" Basman was quoted as saying.

As a Muslim myself, I found the professor's statement most unfair to Muslims. Islam does not condone such violence. Being based on foundations of peace, Islam tolerates the use of violence only as a last resort. And it teaches Muslims to avoid coming to such a decision.

But Basman's statement did not surprise me. Speaking as a Maranao—but excluding my identity as a Muslim—I can say Abdulrahman's reaction to such provocation was not uncommon. In Maranao, Maguindanao and Tausug societies, a culture of violence has long taken root. But while one may attribute a propensity to violence to Maranao culture, definitely it has nothing to do with Islamic culture.

Still it is quite disheartening to observe that most Muslim societies seem to have this culture of violence. This could probably be traced to their pre-Islamic beliefs, or it could be just plain coincidence. I will leave it to social scientists to determine how this culture started and got integrated into mainstream Islamic societies. That is certainly a paradox in Islamic society that needs to be resolved here.

More than just strengthening the false stereotype of Muslims as war freaks, the culture of violence contributes to the deepening of social stratification and the worsening of the clash of cultures between Muslims and Christians in Philippine society. And it exacerbates the already fragile peace and order situation in Mindanao.

The choice before Filipino Muslims then is whether to follow the dicatates of pride or *maratabat* or the teaching and values of their Islamic faith.

Gonaranao B. Musor is finishing his master's in communication at the Univeristy of the Philippines in Diliman.

Sitio Maganda

Mario

MEET my neighbors:

Luisa is a government employee. She has a son who has a girlfriend living in their house. Her mother is a teacher who gets very angry when kids tease her she's old. She consults everyone every time she plans to buy an appliance. A neighbor buying a new flat-screen TV set is big news to her. She once had an affair with a married man and when it ended, she dismissed it by saying, "*Akala mo naman guwapo. Wala namang ngipin.*"

Next is Maria. She once asked me, "*Ano, pogi, okay ba sa 'yo ang tatlo?*" I replied in jest, "*Hanggang dalawa lang.*" Enough said.

There is Attorney. Everybody says he's nice. Everybody likes him. Everybody waits for his next move. People in the neighborhood secretly call him "The Queen," apparently because he didn't want any lady to come with him during last summer's outing in Batangas. And you know, he's "just nice" to the guys and "bitchy" with the girls.

There's also Ti Julian. He and his wife are devout followers of this weird religion. He was so mad he wanted to beat me up with a stick when I told him I thought he belonged to a cult. He told me it was not and bragged that their leader became one of the richest men in the Philippines and lived almost 100 years. He also boasted that his church was one of the most famous and fastest-growing in the country. I wanted to say, "How come I didn't know?" but decided not to.

Then there is Linda who is very proud that her daughter has a job that pays her P20,000 a month. Ask her where is their refrigerator and television, and she will say, "*Pinapatago namin do'n kina* Luisa ."

There's also Robin a Lastikman fanatic, and Edna and her family who sing on the videoke 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

These are all my neighbors.

You think I'm a *pintasero* and wonder how I know these things? I don't snoop into their lives. I don't meddle with their business. I don't even want to write this. But every time I go out, it's like they're forcing me to do so. They supply me with all this wonderful information. I listen and observe.

All I want to say is, there are so many beautiful things just outside our door. And yes, I do love my neighbors.

Mario, 21, doesn't want to use his real name, afraid of what his neighbors might do to him.

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Absentee voting and residency

THIS has reference to the column of Justice Isagani A. Cruz last Feb. 16, 2003 where he said that immigrants cannot vote for lack of residence and that the Absentee Voting Law is constitutionally defective.

I beg to disagree. While it is true that there is a constitutional requirement of Philippine residency "for at least one year and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election" (Art. V, Sec. 1), there is also a constitutional mandate requiring Congress to provide a "system for absentee voting by qualified Filipinos abroad" in Section 2, same article.

It would seem, at first glance, that the two sections are contradictory, but they are in fact complementary. The first applies to Filipino citizens in the Philippines which cannot be said of Filipinos living abroad. To prescribe requisites of Philippine residence for Filipino citizens abroad is to effectively proscribe their enfranchisement. Denying them their right of suffrage simply because they are outside Philippine territory is an absurdity which the framers could not have intended. The first provision cannot be a limitation to render effectual and operative the second one, which cannot be idle or invalid. Any doubt anyway, according to jurisprudence, is resolved in favor of enfranchisement.

Residence is defined by the Supreme Court as the place or abode where the person is habitually present, and to which, when he/she departs, he/she intends to return. It's also his/her home or domicile to which he/she, whenever absent, intends to come back.

Therefore, Filipinos abroad, immigrants or otherwise, who are there for work, business or pleasure cannot be deemed technically to have lost their residence unless they have effectively given up their citizenship and renounced any intention to come back to the country.

What is paramount, as we were taught in law school, is that in statutory construction and interpretation, the intent and purpose of the framers or the authors should be ascertained and given effect. Therefore, members of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the Constitution speak with authority in saying that Filipino citizens abroad, not excluding immigrants, can vote.

—LUTGARDO B. BARBO,
general counsel,
Office of Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.,
Philippine Senate, Pasay City

PPA hits the poor hardest

THE NATIONAL Secretariat for Social Action-Justice & Peace (Nassa), finds inadequate the recent order of President Macapagal-Arroyo to reduce the cost of the purchased power adjustment (PPA).

Any PPA rate reduction, especially at this time, will not redound to real benefits. Depending on the fuel cost and monetary adjustments, the PPA will become costlier as a result of the panic caused by the impending war in Iraq. Price hikes and the poor performance of the peso will make any PPA rate reduction negligible. The ultimate solution is the abolition of the PPA.

The PPA imposition is a human rights violation. Human Rights Advisory CHR (III)-A002-2002, adopted on Dec. 10, 2002, by the Commission on Human Rights, states that the PPA violates, among others, Section 9 Art. II of the Philippine Constitution and Art. 25(1) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights—both covering human rights to adequate and affordable social services. Moreover, the advisory avers that the Filipinos' right to information has been violated, as their approval or agreement was not sought before its imposition. CHR (III)-A002-2002 advises the suspension of the PPA.

The PPA makes the Philippines a weak republic. It victimizes the poor the hardest. Nassa and the social action centers expect Energy Secretary Vince Perez to find a lasting solution to this injustice. Nassa and the social action centers will lead a PPA boycott starting July 2003 if a solution to the problem has not been instituted by then.

The first step toward a solution would be the revocation of onerous contracts between the government and independent power producers. Processes and decisions following the IPP review should be made transparent for people to know the real score. The government should not hesitate in revoking onerous IPP contracts.

—ROEL A. ANDAG,
CBCP-Nassa advocacy coordinator,
National Secretariat for Social Action-Justice & Peace-Caritas Philippines,
470 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila

Dead drunk

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

HER name says it all—how much Precious meant to her parents. And when Precious made it to the University of the Philippines in Diliman, what an occasion for pride and celebration that must have been for her family, as well as her townmates in Trinidad, Benguet.

When I dropped in the other day at Precious Baldo's wake, her parents were wearing UP T-shirts. Former Benguet Rep. Ronald Cosalan was also there, and he talked about how rare it was for people from the Cordillera to make it to UP Diliman. The congressman himself graduated from UP Diliman, first obtaining a degree in political science and then finishing law, so he must have identified closely with Precious, a philosophy major due to graduate next year, with plans to go on to law or medicine.

Precious died four days after a BMW sedan rammed into a sidewalk near one of UP's dormitories, where she and her companions were passing time before a concert. Besides Precious, two other students were brought to hospitals in critical condition, while five others suffered less severe injuries. The two occupants of the car, Richard Ong and Dick Kenneth Soriano, were described as "reeking of liquor" when they were arrested after the accident.

We are bombarded with ads that tell us how drinking enhances one's masculinity, how it fosters camaraderie and community spirit, *iba ang may pinagsamahan,* with a split-second token reminder at the end of each ad saying, "Drink moderately."

But what is "moderate" for the Filipino drinker, especially the male? I once heard someone claiming to an American that Filipinos handle their drinks well, and that we don't have the problem of binge drinking like they do in the States.

Sure. Check our beerhouses and watch how people drink. We do binge, and not necessarily late at night. Precious and her companions were hit by the BMW at 6:30 p.m., with such great impact that the car's front bumper fell off. It is clear the two kids in the BMW had been drinking earlier that afternoon.

One can't help but wonder about things beyond the usual lethal mixture of alcohol and drinking. There's class and power involved as well. A poor man who gets drunk drags himself home, certainly still a nuisance to his family but more or less safely grounded. In fact, if anything does happen it's usually the drunken fool getting mugged on the way home.

A rich drunk kid, on the other hand, with some sleek car like a BMW, maybe with a license plate carrying magical numbers like "8" and other trappings of power, now claims all the roads for his own, converted into one drag racing strip for his private use. And woe to anyone who tries to stop these power-crazed drivers, especially if they have a gun.

In fact, the television cameras that rushed to the scene of the accident at UP were able to catch the two young men arguing with, almost threatening, the police and hinting they had political connections.

What can we do? I'm cynical about passing new laws but it might help to have tough sanctions against "DUI" (driving under the influence). In the United States, spurred by groups like Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) who lost their children to intoxicated drivers, DUI penalties have become stiffer each year. Fines can reach as high as $2,000, jail terms up to five years, even if no one was injured by the driver and the driver's license can be permanently revoked. Some states have even classified habitual offenders as felons, meaning they could lose their right to vote. The message is clear: Drunken driving is a serious crime.

Mind you, even with fairly good law enforcement in the developed countries, the tough laws are not enough to deter drunken driving. There's a pathological side to all this, of addiction combined with distorted notions of power. So the laws also require offenders to undergo psychological tests and to get treatment if they are alcoholics.

Whether in the United States or the Philippines, we badly need to rethink and reorient our drinking culture. For starters, we'd have to challenge norms that equate hospitality with free-flowing alcoholic drinks, or that pressure people to drink out of "*pakikisama*" (getting along).

I'm already seeing some encouraging changes locally, taking off from Western countries: for example, invitations to parties will state that alcohol will be available for guests from a cash bar, meaning you have to pay for your drinks. A good host, too, will not think twice these days about gently chiding guests who are pushing the limit with their alcohol, and for those who have gone overboard, the host may have to look for someone to drive the inebriated home, or suggest the person stay overnight.

When the gang goes out drinking, or to a party, it should also become standard practice to have someone as the evening's designated driver, that person agreeing to keep off alcohol so he or she can get everyone home safely.

Precious' mother, Nancy, is a vegetable vendor and her father, Bernard, is a meter reader. Humble people with humble dreams, shattered after two kids had a bit too much during happy hour.

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

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February 27, 28 and March 1, 2003, at the Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza

70 Years
Architect's Vision:
Diversity of Practice
and Opportunities

Malacañang Palace

I extend my most cordial felicitations to the officers and members of the Philippine Institute of Architects on the occasion of your Diamond Anniversary.

I laud this premier institution of professional architects for being active contributors to the economic growth of the country. This event is a manifestation of your commitment to further development in the fields of architecture, construction and real estate. May this gathering inspire you to dedicate yourselves to a strong and modern Philippine society.

The government also welcomes the efforts of organization like the Philippine Institute of Architects in promoting the virtues of good governance, responsible citizenship, social justice and sustainable development. I therefore ask you to join me in steering our nation towards greater economic stability and growth.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Professional Regulation Commission

The Professional Regulation Commission conveys its most heartfelt congratulations to the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) on the celebration of its 70th Anniversary.

As one of the leading professional associates for architects in the country, the PIA has continued to sustain its efforts in advancing the practice of architecture in the Philippines. For 70 years now, it has successfully carried out its mission to promote professional excellence and foster the highest professional standards for Filipino architects.

In this age of intense global competition brought about by the liberalization of market for professional services, the PIA should commit itself towards the preservation and empowerment of Filipino architects, ensure that they meet international standards of practice, and enable them to compete in the global arena.

The far-reaching effects of globalization to the architecture profession should prod the PIA to pursue professional excellence relentlessly and acquire the best tools and strategies to become active players in the global field.

For it's the part, the Commission will continue to nurture Filipino architects to professional excellence through a customer-focused, technology-propelled, vibrant, and dynamic regulation. Once again, congratulations and Mabuhay!

Antonieta Fortuna-Ibe
Chairperson

Professional Regulation Commission

We, the board of Architecture, Professional Regulation Commission, congratulate the Philippine Institute of Architects, Inc. (PIA) on the celebration of its Diamond Anniversary during its 70th Annual Convention and Trade Exhibit.

PIA's magnitude of contribution to the architectural profession, our country, and the world is superb. Hence we proudly commend it.

Wish PIA success not only on this grand occasion but in all its other future affairs, programs, and activities. Keep up your positive, proactive, and visionary work to make this globe a better place to live in.

Eugene G. Gan, FUAP
Chairman
Board of Architecture

Philippine Institute of Architects

A warm welcome to all the delegates and guests of the 70th Annual National Convention of the Philippine Institute of Architects!

Our Convention Chairman has lined up a powerhouse set of local and foreign professionals who will share their expertise in various subjects of interest to help expound the theme " Diversity od Practice and Opportunities," aside from the popular and informative On-Site Workshops, a distinct feature of all our conventions that has been institutionalized through the years.

This year's convention hopes to stimulate our enthusiasm to search for innovative schemes and approaches to our practice in order to address the problems brought about by the adversities our country is experiencing at present and thus attain the professional growth and development we need as members of the oldest architectural organization in Asia.

Mabuhay ang PIA sa kanyang ika-70 taong annibersaryo!

Remigio G. Abello, FPIA
National President

Philippine Institute of Architects

The Philippine Institute of Architects' 70th year marks a milestone in its history as the pioneer organization, the first, in the whole of Asia.

Since 1933, PIA has represented the professional interests of Filipino architects. And as PIA members, we commit to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings, cities, and communities. But while we adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public, and colleagues of a PIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice—we are, at the same time, forced to ride the turbulent waves of global change. These ambivalent shifts in geopolitics and world economics, have impacted on the more introspective areas of our own business decisions, priority issues, and professional agenda.

Your PIA is, therefore, pleased to offer you this Convention as a 'golden opportunity'—a journey in collaborative learning. We are here to spawn a new generation of opportunities based on best business practices and trends.

We will ride the crest of these challenges. But we have to be ready to be impelled forward to re-think the practice of architecture in the context of opportunity — its renaissance, as well as its promise of diversity. And through these, be inspired by the power of architecture in enriching the human experience.

Nicomedes R. Pagulayan, FPIA
Convention Chairman

KEYNOTE
Let Us Build A Nation
Mr. Ramon R. del Rosario Jr.
President – Phinma

PLENARY 1
Marketing the Lynchpin of Success
Mr. Jaime Cura
Past President
CREBA

Panelists
Arch. William V. Coscolluela
Principal Architect
WV Coscolluela & Associates
Ms. Emily A. Abrera
Chairman
McCann-Erickson

PLENARY II
Diversity of Practice
Prof. Dato' Ruslan Khalid
Architect

Panelists
Arch. Augusto M. Concio
Dean
College of Architecture
University of Santo Tomas
Arch. Gregorio G. Sta. Maria
Architect/Project Manager
Tech Phil.
Arch. Eduardo G. Calma
Architect
TOYM Awardee 2003

PLENARY III
Turning Heritage To Opportunities
Prof. Ambeth R. Ocampo
Chairman
National Historical Institute

Panelists
Rev. Fr. Bernardo Maria Perez,SVD
Heritage Researcher
Arch. Augusto F. Villalon
Heritage Writer/Columnist
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Arch. Ramon R. Zaragosa
Heritage Architect/Artist

PLENARY IV
Seeing Places Finding Opportunities
The Honorable Oscar P. Palabyab
Undersecretary
Department of Tourism

Panelists
Mr. Sonny I. Tinio
Director
Banco Agricola/Researcher
Ms. Susan Calo Medina
TV Travel Host
Ms. Raquel Boncan
President
Phil. Tour Operator Association

PLENARY V
Asset Management An Alternative
Mr. Mark Neasby
DIRECTOR
Australian Centre of Value Management

Panelists
Arch. Delfin M. Viola III
Principal Architect
Mr. Jeffrey R. Sosa
President
Philippine Association for Building Administration
Ms. Cora B. Cruz
Assistant General Manager for Planning
MMDA

PLENARY VI
Urban Renewal
Arch. Philip Cox, RAIA
GOLD MEDALIST

Panelists
Arch. Jesse M. Kayanan, FPIA
Architect / Urban Planner
Ms. Meredith R. Bravo
Director of Graduate Studies
School of Urban Planning and Regional Planning
Mr. Ernesto M. Serote
UP Graduate School,
Environmental Planning

PLENARY VII
Housing a Nation
Arch. Tony Tan Keng Joo
CHIEF ARCHITECT,
HDB

Panelists
Michael Defensor
Chairman
Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
Mr. Arnaldo C. Cuasay
Senior Vice President
GSIS Housing Finance
Atty. Angelico T. Salud
President
National Home Mortgage Corporation
Ms. Josephine C. Angsico
UP Professor
National Housing Authority

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Department of Trade and Industry
assisted by: Ms. SHARON CUNETA – PANGILINAN
Feb. 27, 2003 - 3 pm

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RCBCPLAZA - facilitator- Architect WILLIAM V. COSCOLLUELA
NAIA TERMINAL III - facilitator - Architect JUN BENITO

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Muslim states consider using oil to avert war

KUALA LUMPUR—Leaders of Islamic countries on Wednesday threw their support behind an initiative by France and Germany to avert war on Iraq and said they were considering using their oil to exert pressure on those in favor of an attack.

MAHATHIR

The group also demanded Iraq comply with all United Nations resolutions to get rid of its weapons of mass destruction, including the latest deadline to start destroying its longer-range missiles by March 1.

"We would like to see that Iraq is not invaded by foreign forces," Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad told a news conference after a hastily called meeting of Islamic leaders who had gathered in Kuala Lumpur for a two-day summit earlier in the week of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

"Iraq should abide completely by the requests of inspectors," he said.

Participants praised a resolution presented at the United Nations this week by France and Germany that suggests giving the UN weapons another four months to do their work in Iraq.

"We should make common cause with countries that are against war in Iraq, namely European countries such as France, Germany, Belgium and also Russia," Mahathir said.

"I hope by making a common cause with them we will be able to exert some influence on the United States," he said.

A resolution lodged with the United Nations on Monday by the United States, Britain and Spain says Iraq has missed a "final opportunity" to disarm peacefully and avoid war.

With the European resolution supported by two permanent members and signs several revolving members of the Security Council may not support him, US President George W. Bush has said war might go ahead with or without a UN resolution.

In their NAM summit that ended on Tuesday, the mainly developing countries urged Washington to give peace a chance and pledged support for United Nations processes.

Mahathir acknowledged that some differences existed among the 49 countries attending the Islamic meeting, but all agreed on considering using their oil resources as a weapon to exert pressure on those in favor of war even though this would hurt many poorer countries, he said.

"There has been a suggestion that we look at using our oil wells in order to exert pressure," Mahathir said.

"How this can be done is something else, but there is a consensus as to the need for us to think about these things," he said of a grouping that includes such oil producers as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait and Qatar.

"Oil is a double-edged sword," Mahathir said. "If (the price of) oil goes up many of the countries of the South are going to suffer . . . This double-edged weapon may hurt us more than it may hurt the other parties." But even as the Islamic states voiced their complete agreement at least to consider using oil to exert pressure, they did not ease their demands on Iraq to comply with UN demands.

"Iraq should destroy to show its sincerity," Mahathir said when asked about the UN deadline for Baghdad to begin dismantling its longer-range missiles.

"Anything that the UN asks Iraq to do, Iraq should do," he said.

Chief weapons inspector Hans Blix has demanded Iraq start destroying its longer-range missiles by March 1 and he is due to present a report to the Security Council around March 7.

Islamic nations are to meet again for a summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference in Doha, Qatar, on March 4-5. Iraq has voiced opposition because Qatar is serving as one of the major bases for US troops massing in the Middle East.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, King Mohammed of Morocco, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Syrian Vice President Abdel-Halim Khaddam were among Islamic leaders who joined Iraqi Information Minister Mohamed Said al-Sahaf for the Wednesday morning meeting. *Reuters*

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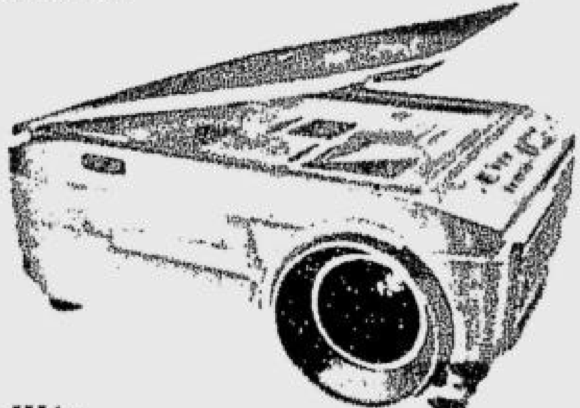

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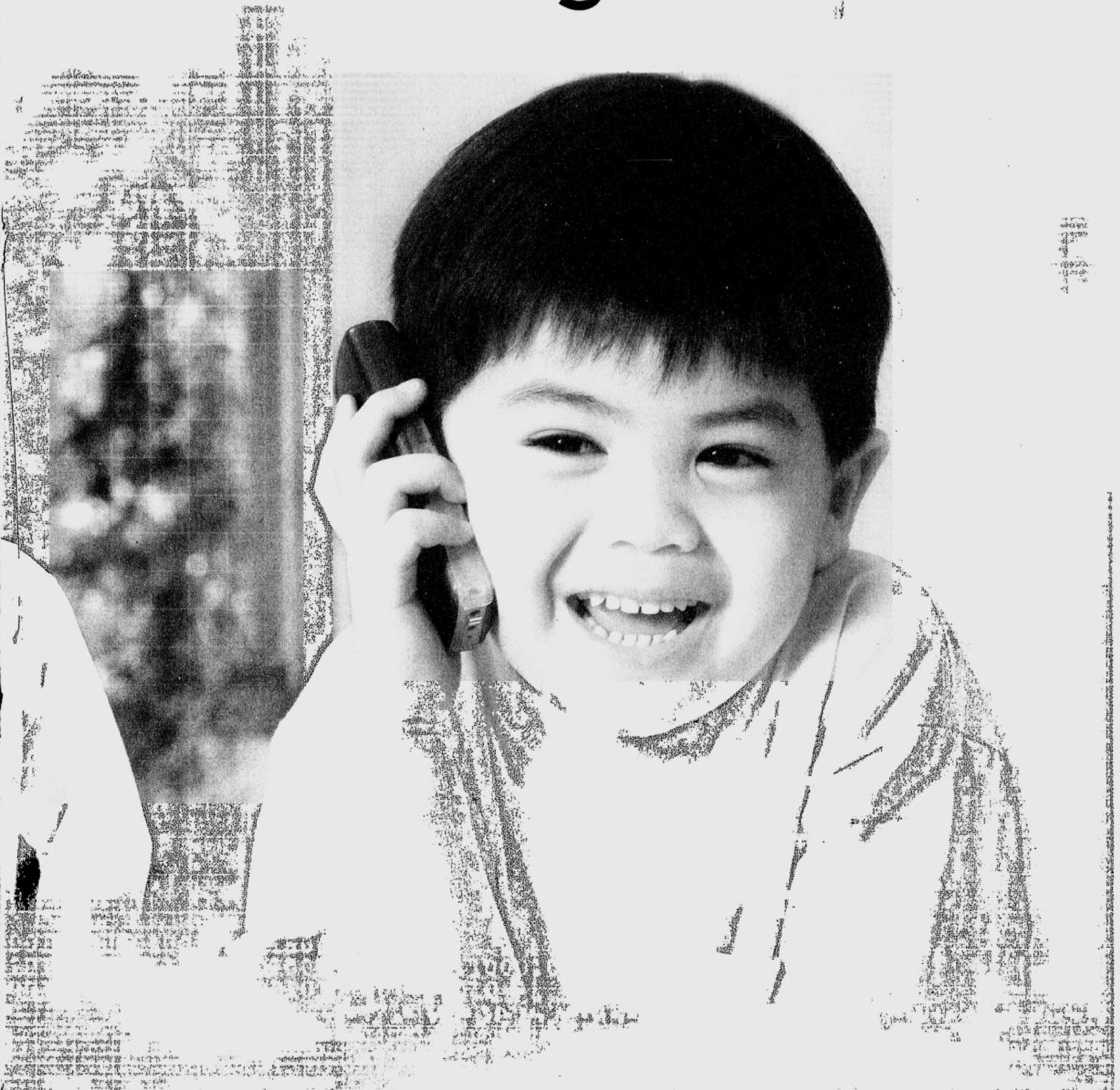

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N. Korea tells people to be ready for war

SEOUL—North Korea urged its military and people to be ready for war, saying the United States could launch a strike at any time, a South Korean news agency reported Wednesday.

The North's Foreign Ministry issued a statement accusing the United States of planning massive war games in the Korean Peninsula so that it could attack North Korea, Yonhap news agency said.

"The United States can launch a preemptive attack on us at any time. This requires our military and people to mobilize all our resources to be fully ready for any contingencies," the North said without elaborating.

The statement was carried by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency, which is monitored by Yonhap. Washington has repeatedly said it has no plans to invade the communist country.

The comments were not unusual in the supercharged atmosphere of recent weeks. But coming hours after the inauguration of South Korea's new president, Roh Moo-hyun, it was a reminder of the forces that will shape his coming months in office: a hostile communist regime and a US administration determined to stop its nuclear weapons development.

In his inauguration address, Roh called on North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions in return for help from the international community in rebuilding its moribund economy. But the first steps in calming jitters, he said, should be dialogue with the North and building "mutual trust."

Tensions have run high since October, when the United States said North Korea admitted having a secret nuclear weapons program.

Hours before his speech, South Korean officials announced that North Korea, which is in the middle of its annual winter training military exercise, fired a short-range, anti-ship missile into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

South Korean officials described the missile as a small, conventional one not capable of reaching Japan or beyond.

Later Tuesday, North Korea said an American reconnaissance plane intruded into its air space on a spying mission, in what the KCNA said was "a premeditated move to find an opportunity to mount a preemptive attack" on the North.

North Korea regularly makes such accusations. In Washington, the Pentagon denied that a spy plane intruded on North Korean airspace.

During the 1993-94 nuclear crisis in the peninsula, North Korea put its 1.1 million-member military, the world's fifth largest, on war footing and moved much of its military into underground tunnels.

The US military announced last week that it will conduct the exercises with South Korea next month. The annual maneuvers are not related to the dispute over North Korea's nuclear programs, it said.

North Korea, which criticizes the maneuvers every year, says the drills will undermine a fragile reconciliation process with South Korea that includes reunions of separated families, cross-border rail and road links and plans for a special economic zone in the North financed in part by the South.

The US military command in Seoul described the joint drills as "defense-oriented" and designed to improve the US-South Korea forces' ability to defend South Korea against "external aggression."

One of the exercises—called "Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration"—will take place March 19-26.

A second exercise—called "Foal Eagle"—is scheduled for March 4-April 2.

Since the nuclear standoff began in October, the United States and its allies has halted oil shipments to the North, while Pyongyang has withdrawn from the global Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and taken steps to reactivate frozen nuclear facilities. *AP*

NORTH Korean soldiers march during a parade in Pyongyang celebrating the the 70th anniversary of the founding of North Korea's People's Army in this April 25, 2002 file photo. AP

Pyongyang gave notice of 3 missile tests

SEOUL—North Korea gave notice of three missile tests, including one which upstaged the inauguration of South Korea's new president, a British minister said on Wednesday.

Bill Rammell, the minister for Northeast Asia at Britain's Foreign Office, told reporters another could be launched on Wednesday but the tests should not be overdramatized because they did not break international rules.

News broke on Tuesday, just hours before South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun was inaugurated, that North Korea had fired a short-range missile into the sea.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell played down the test as "fairly innocuous" although the White House called it diplomatic extortion aimed at forcing a compromise in the standoff over Pyongyang's suspected nuclear program.

Rammell, who, like Powell, attended the inauguration, said he had not discussed the issue in subsequent talks with Roh and also suggested there was little significance in a missile test which rattled Asian markets on Tuesday.

"I think there's a pattern with North Korea of fairly hamfisted gestures and I think this in keeping with that kind of profile," he said.

Asked whether he knew whether North Korea had given notice of Monday's test and if others were planned, he said: "We were aware of that particular advance notice and I think the indication is that there were those two and there's possibly another one today." He declined to elaborate. South Korean media reports have said one missile test failed. Japan's Kyodo news agency quoted Tokyo's officials as saying a test could come on Wednesday.

"I'm confirming to you what's already on the public record.

I really would want to stress that I don't think within the scale of things that this is a hugely significant event," Rammell said. "Clearly the timing was deliberate, but it wasn't a ballistic missile, it doesn't contravene any international agreements and I think it should be viewed in that context."

Rammell said Roh had outlined his views on North Korea during a 20-minute meeting at the presidential Blue House on Wednesday, of Roh's first full day in office.

"He obviously took the opportunity to stress to me the concerns the South Koreans have got given the simple fact of the physical proximity to North Korea, their desire for peace," he said.

"But he was very strong in stressing that the future for North Korea has to be a non-nuclear one and that is non-negotiable." Rammell said the aim was to seek a diplomatic solution and a "firm but low-key" statement from the UN Security Council on North Korea's nuclear program. *Reuters*

Legal experts: Iraq preemptive attack on US justified

SYDNEY—An attack on Iraq by a "coalition of the willing" would be a violation of international law that could end in the world court, 43 Australian legal experts warned here Wednesday.

In an article published by the Sydney Morning Herald, the group of leading barristers and academic lawyers argued that coalition members including Australia had not yet presented any persuasive arguments that an invasion of Iraq could be justified at international law.

But the group says Iraq would now be justified in launching a preemptive attack against the United States and its coalition partners because it is Iraq that is now facing a direct threat.

The group, which includes a former High Court judge, senior counsel and international law professors from Australia's top universities says international law recognizes two bases for the use of force.

The first, enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, allows force to be used in self-defense only if the attack was actual or imminent.

"The second basis is when the UN Security Council authorizes the use of force as a collective response to the use or threat of force." But the group says the Security Council is bound by the terms of the UN Charter and can authorize the use of force under charter seven only if there is evidence of an actual threat which could not be averted by other means such as negotiation and further weapons inspection. *AFP*

Solon nursing baby ejected from session

MELBOURNE, Australia—An Australian lawmaker was ejected Wednesday from the Victoria state legislature's debating chamber after nursing her 11-day-old baby there.

Former Olympic aerial skier Kirstie Marshall, now a Labor lawmaker in Victoria state, was not ordered to leave the parliamentary chamber for breast-feeding, but for bringing a non-elected person into the chamber.

"Charlotte was due for a feed so I whacked her on the breast and walked in, sat down and then (an official) came and told me there was actually a room set aside . . . for me to actually feed her," she told reporters.

Marshall said she would abide by the no-nursing rule from now on, but she hoped to be able to feed Charlotte in the chamber in the future.

"I know it is already under consideration, that's the whole thing," she said.

Australian Breastfeeding Association director Lee King slammed the decision.

"We feel that babies should be breast-fed anywhere at any time. It's a baby's right," King said. *AP*

Blizzard hits US South

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas—A fast-moving winter storm churned across the southern states, dumping 13 inches of snow in Kansas and leaving at least 12 people dead as a glaze of ice wreaked havoc on highways.

More nasty weather was on the way for the region, meteorologists warned.

Authorities said Tuesday that at least nine people died in weather-related traffic accidents in Texas and Arkansas, and three immigrants died of hypothermia in the southern part of Texas.

A motorist stranded in Arkansas and two people who had stopped to help out were killed when a vehicle went over a slick spot and plowed into them on a median of Interstate 530 near Redfield.

The car was being driven by state Rep. Johnnie Bolin, who was hospitalized but not badly hurt. Police said no charges were being considered.

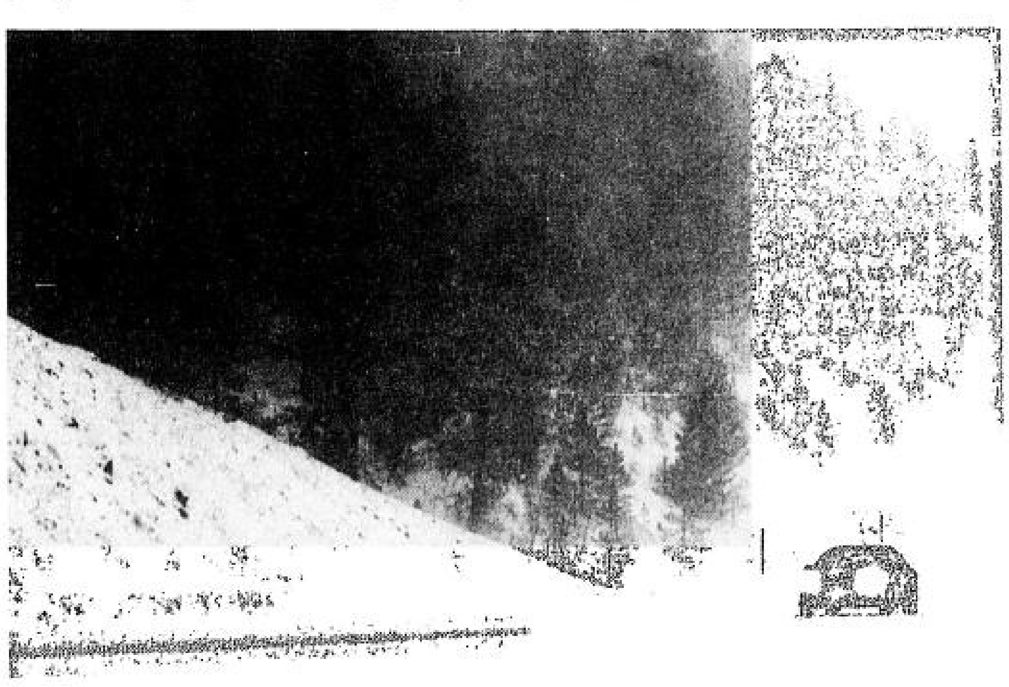
Ice in North and Central Texas sent cars spinning and grounded planes. A series of collisions snarled traffic on Interstate 20 near Dallas; several 18-wheelers were jackknifed, said Department of Public Safety Sr. Cpl. Robert White.

"As soon as they clear one collision, another was happening," he said.

In South Texas, where temperatures struggled to reach the mid-30s Fahrenheit (around 2 degrees Celsius), three undocumented immigrants were found dead Tuesday morning after fellow immigrants sought help from border patrol agents.

In Arkansas, some motorists were trapped in their vehicles for 10 hours on slippery Interstate 40 after a truck jackknifed outside Little Rock. Truck drivers walked down the highway knocking on car windows to make sure everyone was all right.

"My stomach was growling because I hadn't eaten anything," said motorist Renee Lewis. "That man went back to his cab. He brought us chips, cupcakes, baked chicken and rice. I cannot believe somebody took the time to do that." *AP*



A LONE car travels the slippery west-bound lanes of Interstate 70 near Silverthorne, Colo., during a snow storm Feb. 25. Colorado's high country has been pounded by snow during the last week. AP

Victim fights global sex trafficking

By Ken Dermota

WASHINGTON—It is hard to imagine the woman in a sober blue suit and pearl necklace was a prostitute at age seven, or that she found the courage to tell her story at a world conference on human trafficking ending Wednesday.

"I want to put a human face on the problem," Rani Hong said in a low, even voice. She is now a wife and the mother of four.

Hong is one of as many as four million women and children who are sold, kidnapped or coerced into a life of sexual servitude annually, according to the organizers of the "Pathbreaking Strategies in the Global Fight Against Sex Trafficking."

The fast-growing trade is a $7-billion business, according to State Department Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage who addressed the four-day conference.

"It is so lucrative that our intelligence community estimates it will outstrip the illicit trade in guns and narcotics in this decade," he said.

Women and girls are spirited into countries whose language they do not speak, increasing their vulnerability and isolation as they are repeatedly raped, beaten and drugged while clients are forced upon them as frequently as every thirty minutes.

Victims like Hong attended the State Department-sponsored conference alongside attorneys, law enforcement officials and even border guards from 120 countries enlisted by the War Against Trafficking Alliance of nongovernmental organizations.

Hong was born in southern India to a mother who could not care for her and left her in the home of a trusted friend.

"I do not have memory of what happened, but there was enough abuse that I appeared mentally and physically ill," she told the conference. "Because I got such a bad shape I was not a person of value." That may have saved her. She was sold to another ring, which was broken, and she wound up in an orphanage, and was eventually adopted by a family from the western US state of Washington.

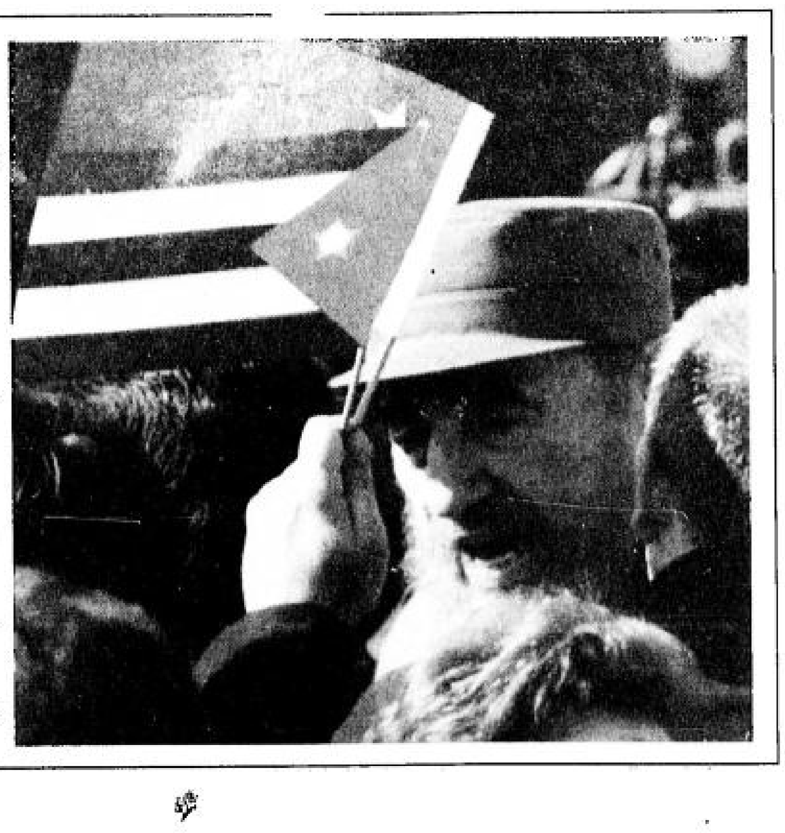
Traffickers often require a victim to "work off" the cost of her transportation, or even her own purchase price.

Girls are bought and sold by traffickers in an industry akin to the 18th Century slave trade.

The shared experiences of the participants, working in 40 different professions, will yield a "tool kit" of best practices, said Jennifer Goodson of the Protection Project at the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, one of the nongovernmental conference sponsors. *AFP*

RED MEETS REDS

CUBAN and Chinese flags are waved as Cuban President Fidel Castro is greeted at Beijing airport Feb. 26. Castro, who arrived after attending a summit of non-aligned countries in Malaysia, is in China for a four-day visit which brings together the heads of two of the world's last communist states. AP



E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Security tightened at Hacienda Luisita

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Army and police officials on Wednesday deployed about 150 policemen, intelligence agents and soldiers to the Hacienda Luisita, where a labor strike had dragged for six days, to secure the vast sugar and industrial estate in time for the visit of some 100 delegates from the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (Seameo) on March 6.

Asian delegates to visit strike-bound Cojuangco estate

The officials were expecting the labor row at the Cojuangco-owned Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) to be over on or before March 6 and had not proposed the cancellation of the day-long tour there by the Seameo delegates, including 14 education ministers.

Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, Central Luzon police director, said security at the estate had been tightened to "preempt communist-terrorists and other dubious (groups) from launching any terrorist activity."

New People's Army rebels are known to be operating in towns outside of Luisita, he said.

Tarlac City policemen, special troopers of the 313rd and 312nd police regional and provincial mobile groups, intelligence personnel from two regional police units, and soldiers of the 703rd Infantry Brigade and 69th Infantry Battalion have been patrolling the estate, a report here said.

The report took note of the active support of militant groups for some 400 striking workers belonging to the CAT Labor Union.

The union has managed to cripple the operations of the sugar mill since Friday when its members went on strike over alleged unfair labor practices.

The workers struck on the eve of the 17th anniversary of People Power 1, which installed Corazon Aquino, a scion of the Cojuangco clan, to the presidency.

The report did not link the militants to any rebel groups but said soldiers were sent to the estate in anticipation of any "untoward incident," which was not specified.

"They are there to maintain peace and order," Calderon said. The CAT management and the union had not set a deadline when to end the protest.

Initial negotiations on Monday had, however, resolved four issues pertaining to hospitalization benefits. Two other issues involving security of tenure will be threshed out in the next round of talks to be facilitated by the labor department's National Conciliation and Mediation Board within the week.

Also on Wednesday, police and Army officers, including Seameo organizers, met at Camp Crame in Quezon City to finalize the security detail of the March 6 visit. Aquino, widow of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., is hosting the day-long tour of the Seameo participants. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

C. Visayas cops told to improve skills at guns

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Policemen in Central Visayas should know how to use their firearms or else they would report to their units armed only with batons.

Chief Supt. Rolando Garcia, Police Regional Office chief, issued this stern warning on Tuesday after Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña criticized the police for their incompetence in using their firearms.

Garcia admitted that all policemen in the region, not just in Cebu City, should be made to improve their marksmanship skills.

This year, he said, all policemen under his command would undergo Firearms Proficiency and Qualification training.

Policemen who failed in the marksmanship tests would be made to undergo another training. If they failed again, Garcia said he would confiscate the firearms of these policemen.

These policemen would be given six months to improve their shooting skills. But in the meantime, Garcia said these policemen would have to contend with batons for weapons.

But if these policemen would still fail in another test, Garcia said he would recommend their dismissal from the service for gross incompetence.

He said he could not believe in the claims of some policemen that their firearms were defective. He said these policemen were just lazy in taking care of their guns.

Osmeña on Monday urged the Cebu City Police Office to conduct training on handling of firearms following the killing of a homicide investigator on Feb. 19.

A still unidentified suspect shot and killed SPO2 Roman Lucero and his friend and police asset Randolph Sorronda inside Sorronda's house in Barangay Tres de Abril Extension in this city.

Police said Lucero was able to draw his 9mm pistol when the suspect shot Sorronda who was sitting beside the policeman.

Lucero, however, failed to fire his gun, enabling the suspect to shoot him first.

Osmeña said he suspected that Lucero was not able to fire because he did not know how to use his firearm.

"I was deeply bothered and disturbed that policeman Roman Lucero died because of the incompetence of the police," the mayor said.

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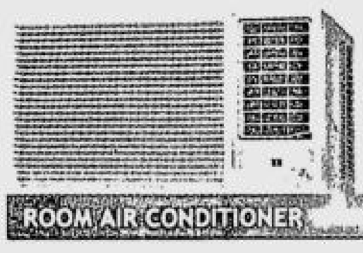

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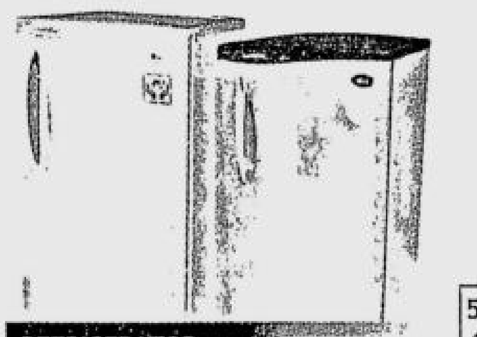

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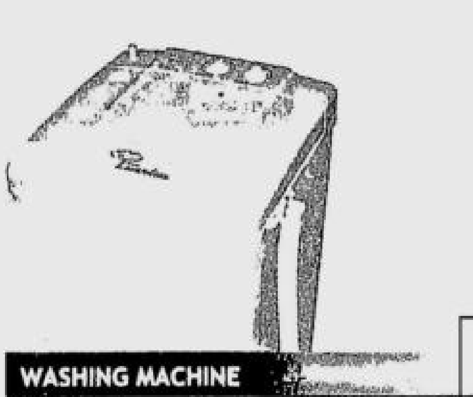

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Iloilo airport project hits snag over land

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—With only four months to construction, the new Iloilo airport project hit a snag after 11 lot owners refused to part with their land within the airport site.

No agreement was reached when the lot owners met on Tuesday with Transportation Undersecretary Edward Harun Pagunsan and Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas.

The 11 lot owners, who own a combined area of 7.7 hectares, rejected the government's offer of P65 per square meter in October 2002.

They were among the 292 lot owners whose pieces of property were included in the site of the new Iloilo airport and an access road.

Pagunsan said the 11 lot owners have until Feb. 28 to negotiate before the government steps in to end the impasse.

If no agreement is reached, the government will expropriate their property and proceed with ground breaking and construction in June.

Expropriation

In an expropriation proceeding, the court determines the property's fair market value. The government takes possession of the property upon depositing in court a percentage of the price it had offered.

"The government does not want to resort to that (expropriation) if things can be done in ways acceptable to the parties," said Pagunsan.

During the meeting, the landowners said the P65 per square meter was a "one-way offer" from the government. They sought better compensation for their mango trees and structures like water pumps.

Pagunsan said negotiations for the structures and the trees would take place after they had agreed to the government's offered price.

"Would you allow 11 lot owners to stop a big government project because they don't agree to the offered price?" said Pagunsan.

The lot owners, who rejected the government's offer, were Moises Mana-ay and his wife Salud Angelo, Maximo and Emma Mana-ay, Norma Alegria, Lucio Yranela or Josefina Vega, Cristino Celda and Presentacion Roncal, Santiago Rote and Corazon Roncal, Andres Campus, Antonio Balcarse and Gervacia Mamarion and Florentino Andon with Mario Andon.

Meeting

They came to the meeting on Wednesday with their lawyer, Conrado Agot, and Raymund Moderes who, like Mario Andon, was among the leaders of the Airport Concerned Alliance (ACA).

The ACA, which was allied with the left-wing group Sanlakas, was initially opposed to the airport project but later joined negotiations for a relocation site and compensation.

Negotiations for the 185-hectare new Iloilo airport of international standards started in 2002. The program was financed by a P6.2 billion loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

Lands in the airport site were described as rain-fed farms. Its value was pegged at P12 per square meter but the lot owners refused to sell their land at that amount.

In April 2002, the DOTC's final offer was P65 per square meter. Lot owners accepted it, except for the 11 who wanted a better price. The DOTC started releasing the payment in October last year.

2 NPAs slain in clash with rival armed group

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Two suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas were killed on Monday during a clash with members of the breakaway faction in Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental.

A rebel belonging to the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) were also wounded in the 30-minute exchange of gunfire with their rival communist group.

The clash started when a squad-sized RPA-ABB group raided a suspected NPA camp in Sitio Tuyupan, Barangay Talalac, Sta. Catalina.

RPA-ABB national commander Carapali Lualhati said the NPA rebels brought the bodies of their slain comrades when they fled to a forested area.

Injured in the RPA-ABB side was one Ka Arnel, who led the group that attacked the alleged NPA camp.

Lualhati said about 20 NPAs, some of them reportedly from Bohol and Samar, were led by Raul Villar, alias Ka Drilon, who used to be a member of the RPA-ABB.

Lualhati said Villar defected to the NPA after the RPA-ABB sanctioned him for his alleged illegal activities. Villar was facing charges for the robbery-slaying of four employees of the Sta. Catalina municipal government in May last year.

Supt. Drusillo Bolodo, Negros Oriental police director, said Villar's group was also engaged in cattle-rustling in the hinterland areas of Sta. Catalina and Siaton towns.

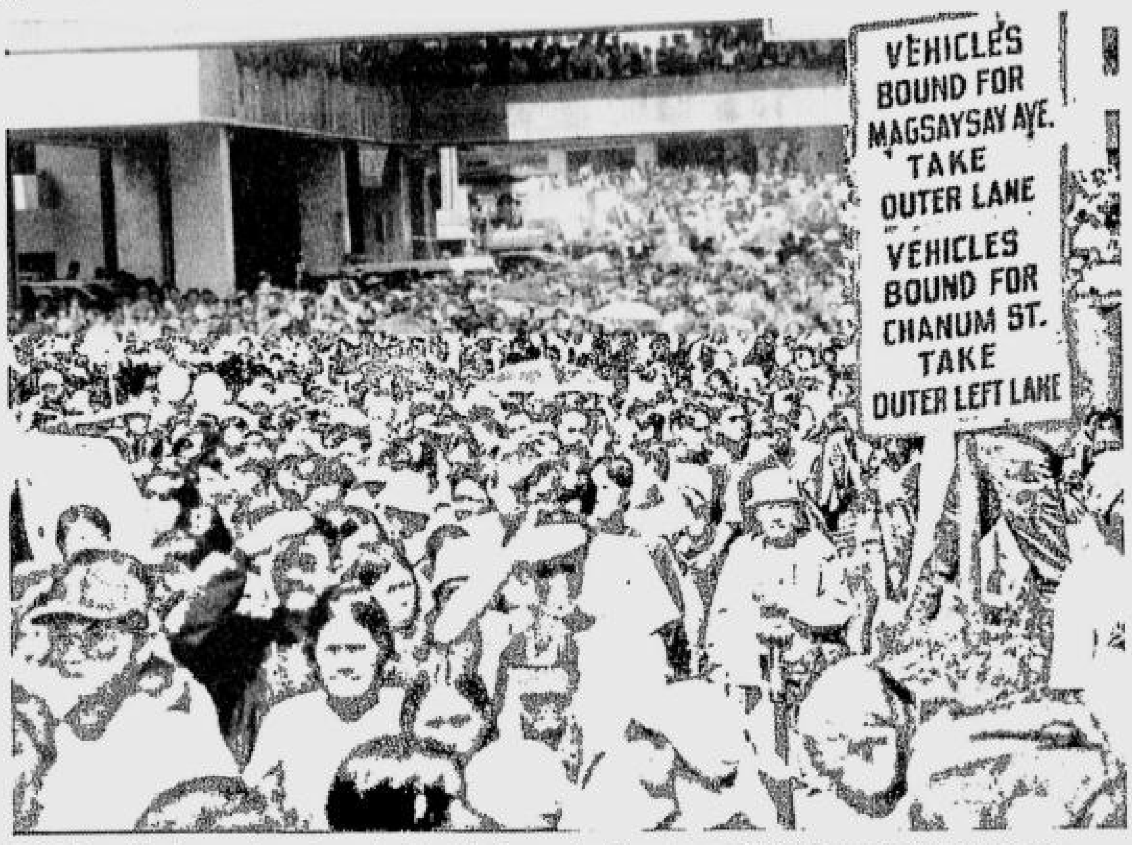
Lualhati said they had not declared war against the NPA. But he said the RPA-ABB has the right to self-defense.

Similar encounters between the NPA and the RPA-ABB have taken place in Candoni towns and the cities of Silay, Talisay, Cadiz, Negros Occidental and on Panay Island last year.

The RPA-ABB broke away from the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines in the early 1990s over political and ideological differences.

The RPA-ABB, with its political wing, the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas, signed a peace pact with the Estrada administration on Dec. 9, 2000, in Don Salvador Benedicto town, Negros Occidental.

The CPP-NPA has accused the RPA-ABB of surrendering to the government and of joining military operations against the mainstream rebel group.


VEHICLES BOUND FOR MAGSAYSAY AVE. TAKE OUTER LANE
VEHICLES BOUND FOR CHANUM ST. TAKE OUTER LEFT LANE

JUST how big the number of people who tried to see the Panagbenga 2003 Flower Festival in Baguio City's Session Road is a point of contention among organizers and observers. TOOTS SOBERANO

Baguio City mayor disputes 'Panagbenga' crowd estimate

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Just how many people can you fit into Baguio City at a given day?

Mayor Bernardo Vergara believes the city's downtown area could accommodate a million people during the two-day run of the street dancing and float parade of the 8th Baguio Flower Festival or Panagbenga.

Vergara made this assertion on Wednesday, using a certification from a Department of Tourism official and the city's police chief, in reaction to the INQUIRER's crowd estimates for the events on Saturday and Sunday.

In a letter to the INQUIRER and in a separate press statement, Vergara claimed that their figure was based on what he described as "mammoth crowds that lined up—eight meters deep—(along) the roadsides of the parade route, as well as those (who) jampacked, to the rafters, the Athletic Bowl grandstand and the oval perimeter grounds."

"Perhaps the news reporter did not get to see the parade activities from the starting point up to the finish, thus his gross underestimation of the crowd. The city population is already over 500,000. Does this mean that only 20 percent of our own populace came to attend the parades, and none from visitors and guests?" Vergara asked in the press statement.

But even tourism officials here find Vergara's figure hard to believe.

"Actually, no one can fit a million people in Baguio, much less Session Road. The city is already having a hard time dealing with its present population of (252,386, based on the National Statistics Office's recent census)," said Edgar Jularbal, a tourism officer of the DOT Cordillera office.

The city, which was built by the American colonial government in the early 1900s, was designed to accommodate only 25,000 people, according to historical accounts.

Jularbal said the DOT is still collating tourist arrival figures for February. Vergara visited the DOT Cordillera offices on Wednesday noon to obtain these figures, DOT officials told the INQUIRER.

The DOT figures sample the net receipts of 55 Baguio establishments, which are compared with hotel booking reports issued by the Baguio Association of Hotels and Inns (Bahai).

The John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC) described 2002 as the largest tourist draw yet, peaking with 300,000 visitors during the flower festival parades.

In Jularbal's report in a recent press conference, Baguio suffered a reduction of tourist arrivals from 1,077,380 in 2001 to 770,934 last year.

This early, hotel bookings fell short of last year's flower festival figures, although Bahai members reported full bookings for the 3,000 hotel rooms available in the city.

"I don't think we drew as many people as we did last year," said a JHMC official, who used to run the festival.

The city government took over the running of annual event from the former John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. (JPDC) and the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco).

Reacting to the INQUIRER reports, Vergara said he "truly cannot understand this unpatriotic demonstration to the city's interests."

"(Mayor Vergara) got his (million people) figure from a certification issued by the DOT," claimed Noli Balatero, Vergara's senior aide. "I personally believe there was roughly 800,000 people who watched the parades."

But some of the city's engineers and architects think the city government's math is faulty.

Session Road alone, which spans 1.74 km, will only accommodate 3,400 people, assuming that each individual is half a meter apart, and all of them stand side by side in a row covering the whole road stretch, said a government engineer.

The flower festival parades on Saturday and Sunday navigated through half of Session Road, and exited through Harrison Road which is 1.03 kilometers on their way to the Athletic Bowl at Burnham Park.

Given the depth of about five to six rows of people, watching from both sides of the road, the modest estimates given by a Baguio-based accountant run to some 50,000.

"This did not factor in the fact that many of the spectators were parents of the children who joined the parades. I am sure there were tourists. We should be proud that they came. But let's not (exaggerate) the impact of this last festival," he said. *With reports from Desiree Caluza and Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Counter flow enforced on North tollway

ONE LANE of the North Luzon Expressway was closed to traffic starting Feb. 26 to give way to the improvement and expansion of the highway by general contractor Leighton Contractors (Asia) Ltd. of Australia.

In a statement, Leighton said a counter flow traffic scheme was implemented on certain portions of the expressway, the main artery linking Central and Northern Luzon and Metro Manila.

Groundbreaking rites on Feb. 12 led by the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) of the Lopez Group paved the way for the start of the project.

Men and equipment have moved into the 84-kilometer tollway currently managed and operated by the PNCC.

Counter flow traffic was introduced at the southbound lane between the San Simon Interchange and the San Fernando Interchange; the southbound lane between San Fernando Interchange and Sta. Ines Interchange in Mabalacat, Pampanga.

Traffic management teams were deployed to the sections to supervise the flow of vehicles and reduce the amount of inconvenience to motorists.

Billboards were put up to warn motorists of the counter flow scheme while PNCC personnel distributed flyers.

On Feb. 18, Leighton set up barriers from the Balintawak toll plaza to the Burol Interchange, a section of the highway popularly known as Tabang, to separate "live" traffic from work areas in the southbound and northbound lanes.

Barriers were also installed in a section of the shoulder road from the Balintawak toll plaza to Burol Interchange.

Mining firm, union return to talks to end strike

BAGUIO CITY—A miners' union resumed negotiations on Tuesday here with the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. after it formally rejected an agreement that would have ended a three-week-old strike in the firm's mining area in Mankayan, Benguet, according to the National Conciliation and Mediation Board.

Marietta Morales, NCMB Cordillera director, said she was advised by Panelo Ambas, president of the 1,526-member Lepanto Employees Union (LEU), that his members did not accept a Feb. 23 memorandum of agreement that the NCMB had entered into with the 160-member Lepanto Local Staff Union (Llosu) and the firm's lawyers.

The agreement was signed on Feb. 23 during a marathon dialogue at the NCMB Baguio office.

The INQUIRER learned on Wednesday that instead of a final document, the Feb. 23 agreement gave both sides until March 31 to settle the company's obligations to the miners.

The period will also allow the two sides to thresh out a re-working of policies that address complaints over compulsory holiday work order, labor contracting and administrative sanctions for "high grading" or gold theft.

"To be fair to him, (Ambas) had hesitated. He did not want to sign the document until he first laid it out before (the LEU). But he finally relented to break the stalemate at Mankayan. But the union's Feb. 23 general assembly rejected the agreement so we are back to the negotiating table," Morales said.

Mediator

Rolando Rico Olalia, NCMB executive director, handled the mediation.

Ernesto Dulag, Llosu president, had not issued any written objection to the Feb. 23 agreement. Ambas, however, said he asked his members to remove all strike barriers at the mine gates and allow access to the mine tunnels.

But the operations of the gold and copper mine remain frozen, said LCMC human resources officer Flor Fajilan, despite the return of its supervisory staff and some 500 miners. Lepanto exports $47 million in gold a year.

"The (LEU members) still linger around the mine site, although they have not reported for work. They are not stopping people from entering, so they are abiding by that particular stipulation in the agreement," Morales said.

KMU

According to the Cordillera Labor Center, an affiliate of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), the miners also refused to strike a compromise deal over the reinstatement of 42 union leaders, who were fired for launching the strike that started on Feb. 2.

Glenn Batilando, Lepanto's environment manager who led the first negotiations, said the leaders' reinstatement was part of the agenda, which "the company could not compromise, also."

"Lepanto president Brian Yap directed us to stand fast and to insist that we no longer need the services of the 42 union leaders. We don't want this to turn bloody. We will keep the discussions civilized and democratic. But that is the company's position," Fajilan said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

'Love month' also season for suicides

By Job Belen
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TABACO CITY—Six troubled individuals, aged 15 to 30, committed suicide within a week in February while the world celebrated the "month of love."

A husband and wife in Barangay Cajugotan, Bacacay town ended their lives after a quarrel due to jealousy.

The couple, identified only as Jerome and Jenny, 28 and 26, had two children ages 6 and 4.

Jerome reportedly got pissed off when his friends teased him about his wife seeing someone else.

Witnesses said Jerome went home drunk at around 9 p.m. Feb. 12 and confronted Jenny.

A quarrel ensued when Jenny admitted that she had another man while insisting that she loved Jerome.

To show their real love for each other, Jerome asked Jenny to commit suicide with him.

When silence fell in their house, their neighbors tried to check what happened and discovered the two lying in a pool of blood.

Another man, identified only as Eugene, 30, died after drinking poison. He was declared dead on the eve of Valentine's Day at the Aquinas University Hospital in Legazpi City.

Eugene's girlfriend said she never expected he would commit suicide since they just had a date. She said she was four months pregnant and told her boyfriend to set a wedding date.

Although Eugene was willing to marry her, Eugene was already married to a woman who left him with a child.

Eugene wanted to talk with his wife to settle the problem until one day, according to Eugene's mother, the wife called up to announce that she had decided to leave Eugene.

A 15-year-old boy of Barangay Balading in Malinao town was found dead hanging from a tree after he was scolded by his mother before leaving the house on Feb. 11.

The mother said she scolded her son over a love affair.

A 20-year-old man hanged himself in this city's police station where he was detained on charges of throwing stones at passersby in Barangay San Roque. The motive for the suicide was unclear.

On Saturday, Ronilo Lucana, 23, a college dropout, also hanged himself on a tree.

Police said the latest suicide had not been listed in the blotter.

Missing fishermen's kin appeal to Ople for help

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Zambales officials have asked Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople to help confirm reports that at least five fishermen from the province, who have been reported missing since December 2001, have been arrested and jailed in Indonesia.

The search for the five came after authorities found at least seven other missing fishermen in Vietnam in January, said Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain III.

Lacbain identified the five as Alfonso Asis, 34, the captain of the boat MV Sto. Niño; Epifanio Inot Jr., 34; Ariel Asis, 22; Joel Desio, 22; and Jon Rey Luchavez, 24. All are residents of Barangay Calapacuan's Purok 6 in Subic, Zambales. They left Subic Dec. 25, 2001.

"Their families are extremely worried," Lacbain told the INQUIRER by telephone.

He said a Taiwanese, whom he did not identify, reported seeing the five on a Taiwanese vessel on the South China Sea west of Subic.

The Taiwanese, said the vice governor, claimed receiving reports that the five fishermen and some Taiwanese fishermen, might have been arrested for fishing in Indonesia. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

THIS small Hawksbill marine turtle was turned over by a resident of Barangay Ilaya, Calapan City to the city government on Sept. 3, 2002.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PENRO-ORIENTAL MINDORO

Marine turtles find safe haven in Or. Mindoro

By Madonna Virola
Calapan City

IS ORIENTAL Mindoro becoming a home to marine turtles? Residents in Calapan City believe so, as turtles keep coming to the province to nest.

Another marine turtle, a 35-year-old Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) measuring 71 centimeters, was found on Feb. 2 in Barangay Suqui in Calapan.

Bernardo Alvis, one of the villagers, reported that at around 7 p.m., he saw the turtle right at his gate and apparently digging a hole for nesting.

At first, Alvis brought the creature to his house where it stayed the whole night. The next morning, he turned it over to the city government.

The City Public Safety Department, in coordination with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro), released the turtle to the sea after it was tagged with Nos. P15789 and P15787.

Ricardo R. Natividad, forester at the Protected Areas and Wildlife Services, said the Penro expected the arrival of the marine turtles from October to March.

"This is the time for nesting. The turtles go back to where they were hatched," said Natividad.

The marine turtles' estimated period of "*pagdadalaga*" (puberty) is 35 to 50 years. Their feeding area is far, experts say.

The Olive Ridley is the most abundant of all marine turtle species. According to a Penro reference material, it is called *pawikan* in Filipino.

An adult female measures 58 cm to 66 cm along its carapace and weighs between 36 and 41 kg. The carapace is generally olive brown, while the pastron is yellowish white.

The Olive Ridley feeds on shrimps, jellyfish, crabs, snails, algae and sea grass.

Disturbed

Natividad said the latest turtle find had one egg. "Perhaps it was nesting and was disturbed when found," he said.

On Sept. 22 last year, Mindoro villagers interacted with 134 Olive Ridleys in Roxas town.

Another green Olive Ridley, measuring 170 cm, was found on Oct. 16, 2002. It was retagged and freed in the presence of officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources main office in Quezon City.

On Sept. 3, Nowie Aytin, of Barangay Ilaya, turned over to the city government a Hawksbill turtle which he had been keeping since it was four years old. According to a documentation report, Aytin bought the creature from a resident of Barangay Ibaba at P250 in 1999.

The DENR placed tag No. RP8427 on its right flipper and tag No. RP8445 on its left. The turtle, measuring 41 cm long and 35 cm wide, was freed from the shore of Barangay San Antonio.

Jeff Rafa, of Barangay Balite, said small turtles were also found in their barangay, but they were sold and not reported to authorities.

Turtle footprints are also found in Barangay Lazareto, according to another city resident.

Natividad related that a marine turtle also nested in White Beach in Puerto Galera last year.

The Penro investigated a reported case of pilfering turtle eggs. A year after, it found the suspected place already sealed with cement. Natividad said this should not have been done because the turtle would most likely go back to the place.

As an intervention measure, the Penro conducted an orientation workshop on "Marine Turtles and Dugong Conservation" on Oct. 1-2, 2002 in Puerto Galera.

The dugong or sea cow is found only in the Philippines, Natividad said. None of this species can be found in Mindoro but in Batangas.

"People are more aware now of the protection of these marine turtles," he said.

Cases of turtle nestling should really be reported to the DENR and the local government unit, Natividad said.

He discouraged keeping the turtle even for a short time because it needed natural habitat for survival.

Natividad added that it should be checked whether there is a tag on the turtle. The tag is meant to monitor and document it.

Of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, five are found in the Philippines. The Green Turtle, Hawksbill and Olive Ridley species can be found in Mindoro.

Displaced Mangyan families make accessories to survive

By Clarice Colting
Dasmariñas, Cavite

NANAY Ligan shows the beads she has produced at the Kanlungan.

CLARICE COLTING

NANAY Uli-an already has weak eyes but she continues to weave "*ramit*" [Mangyan woven item]. What she has produced are sold at the Kanlungan Refugee Center in the Philippine Christian University in Dasmariñas, Cavite where she has been staying since August last year.

Proceeds from the sales help sustain the day-to-day needs of the 28 refugee families at the Kanlungan.

Nanay Uli-an's case was among those shared by women refugees during a multisectoral gathering held in Quezon City to commemorate National Arts Month this month.

While they discussed the situation that has caused the evacuation of Mangyan and Dumagat peoples in Southern Tagalog, and appealed for justice for victims of the fighting between government soldiers and communist rebels, what was different this time was their contribution to the arts festival called "Kulturang Kalye."

The festival, which began on the first week of February and ended on Sunday, featured music, dance, poetry, film, theater and photography. It was coordinated by folk singer and poet Jess Santiago.

The women evacuees gave a lecture-demonstration of their native weaving and making bead accessories.

Weaving

Nanay Uli-an has been weaving since she was a young girl in Bulalakao, Oriental Mindoro. She said she learned the skill by watching the old people in their community. They used to make their own thread, she recalled. These days, they buy the item from the town centers.

"When the cotton plant flowered, we took them from the *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming area). We dried them under the sun and pressed them to remove the seeds," she said in Filipino, making gestures that seemed like she was hitting something.

"We did this even at night to make thread," she added, her fingers making twirling motions.

She was apologetic. She said that when she arrived at the Kanlungan wearing her native *tapis* (wrap-around), she did not know how to speak Tagalog. "I only learned (to speak it) here," she said.

Ramit

It takes her two to seven days to finish a *ramit*, depending on its size. The item sells at around P650.

Her husband seemed proud when he said Nanay Uli-an had already woven a large blanket in Mindoro.

She uses pieces of wood carved in different sizes for weaving. The ones she was using at the Kanlungan were brought to her when several members of the Tanggol Karapatan, a militant human rights group, went to Mindoro.

Nanay Uli-an said they wove only for their needs, not for livelihood. "We don't buy much clothing. We only need to buy thread."

Sometimes, those who do not know how to weave buy from them.

The refugees, now numbering 136 Mangyan, Dumagat and Tagalog folk, left their homes last year due to intense military operations against New People's Army rebels in their communities.

Longing for home

"The military went to our communities. They accused us of killing one of them even though we were staying in the mountains and rarely went down," Nanay Uli-an narrated. "I was crying when I left our home."

Three of her seven children are also in Kanlungan following incidents of alleged military harassment. Her other children stayed in Mindoro to take care of their animals.

One could feel Nanay Uli-an's sadness and longing to go back home. She kept on saying she hoped she could do so on Monday.

"I am sad here. I'm not used to eating rice. If there is coffee, that is what I drink. Sometimes, I cry," she said.

She said she did not feel well and had not been able to eat for a few days now. All she wanted was to go home.

Beads

"What we do here is not for us alone but for everybody's daily needs," Nanay Ligan said with a smile when asked about the bead bracelets and necklaces hanging for sale from the roof of her hut at the Kanlungan.

For her, this is a way of helping the refugees at the center.

Nanay Ligan, a 36-year-old Mangyan from Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, said making bead accessories had become a pastime for the refugees. She has taught the other refugees how to make the items as "remembrance" from her when they go back to their own homes.

Back in Mindoro, Ligan said they made the bead accessories or wove after they finished their *kaingin*, their main source of livelihood.

"This is our culture," she claimed.

Their children wear many of the accessories during school graduations. Her children also bring some to be sold during school occasions.

The bead accessories at the Kanlungan sell at P50-P70 each. Whatever is raised from the sales is added to the funds for the refugee center.

Culture

Nanay Ligan makes two bracelets per day. Other refugees make similar bead accessories.

Those who buy are usually students and church people who visit the Kanlungan.

"These are our own native designs, except for the necklace with a star, which I got from the Christmas tree here," she confessed laughing.

Nanay Ligan learned how to make bead accessories when she was still young.

"I will teach my children so that our knowledge, our culture will not be lost," she said.

Nanay Ligan and her seven children [the eldest is only 17 years old] have been at the center since February last year. She was pregnant when she left Mindoro but she decided to leave because of reported military harassment in their community.

"We were scared so we left," she had said in an earlier interview.

Nanay Ligan gave birth to her youngest child, Liva, on March 13, 2002 when they were told to start setting up their huts at the PCU in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Sincere contribution

What the refugees get from Nanay Uli-an's weaving and Nanay Ligan's bead accessories may not be enough to feed all of them, but for them this contribution is worthwhile for their survival.

Those who do not weave and make bead accessories plant vegetables in a small field near their huts.

The refugees' other needs are provided for through solicitations and donations from various organizations, schools, and church groups.

According to Nancy Rada, secretary general of Tanggol Karapatan, what the evacuees need more than the material necessities is justice for the human rights violations brought about by military operations in the region.

"What [they] need most is to go back to their homes and live a peaceful life. Our campaign is to put a stop to militarization in the countryside and stop human rights violations," Rada said.

Mangyan with bulging cyst wishes to be treated at PGH

By Madonna Virola
Baco, Oriental Mindoro

REMNAYON

MADONNA VIROLA

HE squatted on a corner, watching the people around him, and talked only when spoken to. But they would hardly miss the big bulge on his right neck.

For about 20 years, the people he deals with have been used to his condition.

"I asked for help from the barangay officials before the election. They made promises, but up to now, there's no result yet," said Carlos "Caloy" Remnayon, 44, of Barangay Mayabig, 6 km from the poblacion of Baco. He belongs to the Iraya Mangyan tribe.

Remnayon said he had been to the provincial hospital for treatment but was advised to seek help at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila.

"They would not operate on my cyst because, they said, it was dangerous," he added.

The doctor explained to him that his eyes and passageway for saliva might be affected.

He was told that removing the cyst was easy but the result could not be guaranteed.

A neighbor told him that with his condition, Remnayon might not be able to carry 50 kilos but only 20 kilos.

"They fear that my jaw could be dislocated, my sight could get blurred and my breathing organ impaired," he said.

But he said all he wanted was to find out if there was truth to what he had been told.

He said he had learned to endure the pain caused by the cyst.

A resident described Remnayon's existence as hand-to-mouth. He has a 15-year-old son, Fermin and three daughters—aged 12, 9 and 4 years old. To feed them, Remnayon works as a hired hand, cutting grass and tilling the land, and earns P100 to P120 for a day's labor. Farm work though is seasonal.

Only Fermin and his 12-year-old sister go to school. Fermin helps his father with his work. Both of them finished only Grade 4 in a public school because of poverty.

When there are orders, Remnayon's wife weaves *nito* (rattan) into baskets, plates and other products. She earns P60 for a day of basket making.

Orders do not come regularly as the family lives at the foot of Mt. Halcon, which is not very accessible to traders. For someone who even goes without food on some days, Remnayon's regular fare consists only of banana and cassava, which he asks from others.

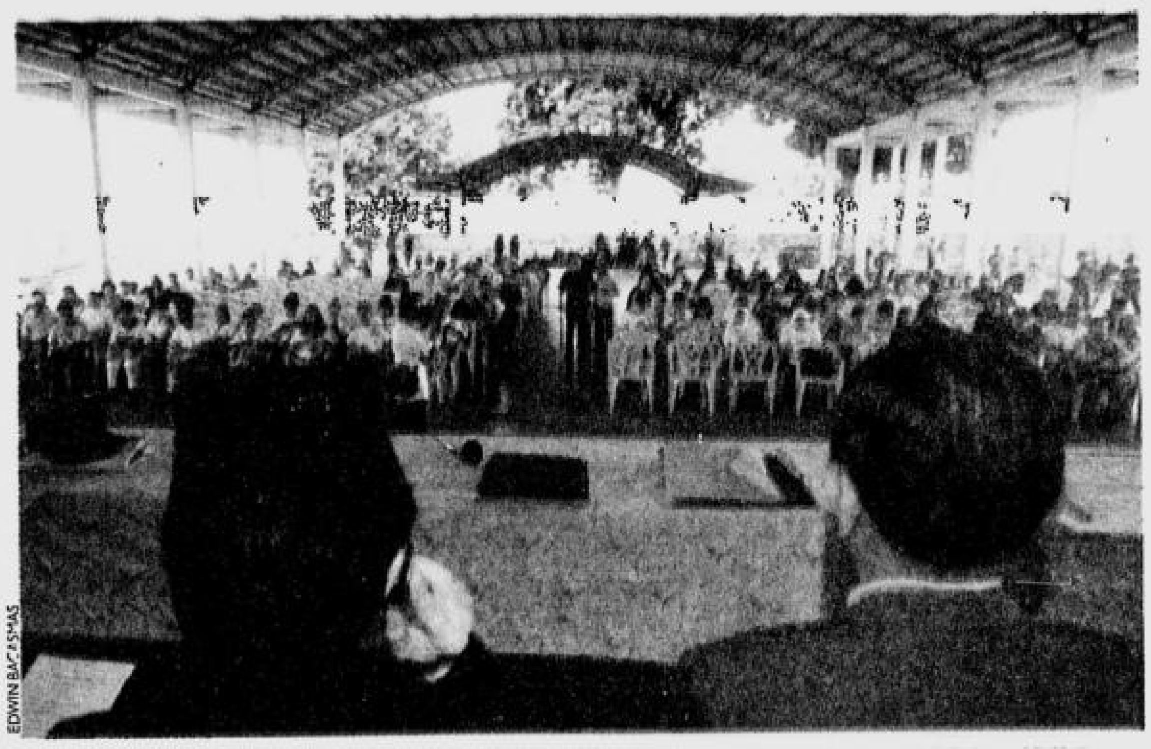
His *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farm) is a 2.5-hour walk from where he works as grass-cutter. His house is about 300 meters from the work area.

Remnayon's regret is that he has no means or contact to go to the PGH. Confined to the mountain, he has resigned his wish to be treated at the PGH.

"Even if I dream, it's useless," he said. "I experience difficulty but that's life."

Jolo babies put to sleep with songs of revenge

From page A1


EDWIN BACASMAS

CONSULTATIVE assembly in Jolo is held by Defense Undersecretary Feliciano Gacis (right) and DILG Assistant Secretary Abraham Iribani to answer questions on the Balikatan 03-1 military exercise.

support, the Philippine military would not find it easy to rout the Abu Sayyaf.

"It's not easy to decimate people who are masters of the terrain. These people can survive the worst situations," he said.

He reiterated that he was not consulted before Malacañang approved the holding of Balikatan 03-1 in the ARMM province of Sulu.

"I am the governor of the ARMM," said Hussin, a former senior leader of the separatist Moro National Liberation Front that signed peace with the government in 1996. "I think I deserve at least the courtesy of being consulted. I am not only governor, I also come from Sulu."

Hussin warned of retaliation from the US forces if and when they suffer casualties as a result of Balikatan 03-1.

"There is the possibility of accidents that will cause casualties among our friends from outside," he said. "We do not want this to happen because they might retaliate massively. [If this happens], who will be the victims again? Civilians."

On the United States' avowed role of training the Philippine military to fight terrorism, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said it should instead fulfill its commitment to upgrade the weapon system and intelligence-gathering capability of Filipino soldiers, and let them do the fighting.

On the earlier statement of President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson that the government would shelve Balikatan 03-1 in Sulu if the United States insisted on sending its soldiers to combat, Pimentel said: "I wish Toting [Ignacio Bunye] were the President so he could say that with a straight face."

Malacañang announced earlier this month that US soldiers would be deployed to Jolo under Balikatan 03-1.

It has since tried to downplay reported comments by unnamed Pentagon officials that the 1,750 US troops to be assigned to Jolo would engage in actual combat against the Abu Sayyaf.

Sensitive issues

Hussin said that had he been consulted about the matter, he could have warned the national government to "tread carefully on sensitive issues" like engaging in combat operations in Sulu.

"But then these are decisions from the top," he said. "We don't have the right to question."

He said the Philippine military "knows the limitations."

"They have to exercise caution because there are many armed groups [in Jolo] that don't belong to any kind of disciplined organization," he said.

Never ending

Nevertheless, Hussin said, Filipino troops would still be better off dealing with the Abu Sayyaf on their own.

He said that the Armed Forces was "doing the job" and that the Abu Sayyaf was "marginalized."

"There is no reason why we have to invite foreign troops to assist us in going after terrorists," he said.

Hussin added that the national government should have consulted ARMM officials, "not because we want to feel important but because we know the people."

Pimentel reminded Malacañang that the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement does not allow the deployment of American combat troops anywhere in the Philippines.

He said the US strategy of participating in combat operations here was both flawed and unacceptable to the country.

"It's a good objective, but [the Americans] need not do it themselves," the senator said. "The US war against terrorism will be more credible if they implement their old promises to upgrade the armaments, supplies and intelligence capability of our soldiers—promises that have never been fulfilled."

Pimentel said even some Filipino soldiers were against the entry of foreign troops in combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

He said the government should not succumb to American pressure because the United States had its own agenda to pursue.

"They want military presence in our country without the bases," he said. "And one way of doing that is to go after terrorists because the search for terrorists is a never-ending quest."

Pimentel reiterated that the United States merely wanted to convert Sulu into a "laboratory of experiment" to test the fighting prowess of its troops and the efficacy of its equipment in the campaign against local terrorists.

At the House, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos warned the President that she would be liable for impeachment if she allowed American troops to engage in combat operations in the country.

Marcos, vice chair of the House foreign relations committee, pointed out that Article 11, Section 2 of the Constitution explicitly prohibits the entry of foreign military troops for direct or indirect combat operations without the approval of Congress.

She said allowing US troops to hold combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf and other targets in Mindanao would be culpable violation of the Constitution and ground for impeachment.

"Malacañang's decision to allow, or, as the US claims, invite, American troops for combat operations is definitely forbidden," Marcos said.

She also called on the President to reveal the government's policy on the presence of US troops amid the increasing fears over an impending war in Iraq.

She said the President should disclose to the public the real purpose of the meeting between Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and his American counterpart, Donald Rumsfeld. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

AMERICAN lecture on counterterrorism tactics by a member of the elite Special Forces is conducted for Filipino soldiers at Malagutay camp in Zamboanga City. AFP

US soldiers lecture RP troopers on combat tactics

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Twelve US soldiers yesterday lectured their Filipino counterparts on techniques to be u sed in possible encounters with terror groups in the South.

Clutching firearms and notebooks, the Filipinos listened attentively even as a heavily armed US security detail patrolled the area, checking the surroundings with binoculars.

Journalists were allowed into the tightly secured training area at Camp Enrile in Barangay Malagutay.

Col. Horacio Lactao, the Philippine military's deputy director for education and training, said the Filipinos would first be trained for small-unit, platoon operations, gradually advancing to larger company formations.

The training will include combat exercises in such areas as close-quarter battle, survival techniques and medical evacuation, he said.

T/Sgt. Rey Aguila, a veteran of 19 years of combat with communist and Moro rebels, showed eagerness to learn new techniques from the Americans, many of whom were younger than he.

"They have a lot to teach us," he said. "There are a lot of techniques and tactics that are being introduced to us to combat terrorism."

Aguila said the US troops taught techniques for treating wounded enemies in the field, something expected to convince more rebels to surrender.

Another soldier, Cpl. Rubee Rubios, expressed envy at the modern M4 carbines carried by the Americans, which are much more compact than his M-16 rifle. *AFP*

Militants blame Reyes for entry of US troops

By Donna S. Cueto

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was yesterday urged to dismiss Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes for allegedly instigating war in Mindanao and bringing US troops to the area, particularly Sulu.

The call was aired by economist Walden Bello and the party-list group Akbayan, both of whom said Reyes was "setting up" the President and undermining civilian authority through the military offensives that not only stopped the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front but also paved the way for US intrusion in the region.

"We do not believe that the Americans got it into their heads to take on combat roles in Sulu on their own; they were primed by someone in the Philippines," Akbayan said in a statement.

"We do not believe that Army commanders in Pikit [North Cotabato] disobeyed the President's order to desist from attacking the MILF on their own; they were assured of backing by the Department of National Defense," it said.

Bello, who is also national chair of Akbayan, warned that Reyes was preparing Mindanao to be the United States' second front in its war on terror, in the process destroying peace efforts and gains in the region.

It is not in the military's interest to have peace in Mindanao, he said.

Akbayan called on the President to also order the military to move Balikatan 03-1 out of Sulu, saying that by itself the presence of US troops there was a "provocation."

Joel Rocamora, Akbayan national president, said the President had "a significant role in endangering our constitutional processes" by allowing the country to be used as the United States' second front in its anti-terror campaign.

Rocamora also said as many as 100,000 persons had been displaced because of the fighting.

Bello said the Philippines was now "more explicitly a combatant in the US war against terror, making our country fair game for retaliatory attack."

'Those who forget the past are bound to repeat it'

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—"Is there a living witness? Is there a living Joloano who saw and can tell what happened?"

The West Point-trained commander of the military's Southern Command may have rubbed salt on a collective wound Tuesday, when he raised questions about the 1906 massacre in Patikul, Sulu.

"We should not consider what happened one century ago and fear that it might happen again," said Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, commenting on the warning by Muslim leaders that American soldiers coming to Sulu would only be digging their own graves.

To which Gov. Parouk Hussin of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao replied: "Those who forget the past are bound to repeat it."

Hussin and Sulu Rep. Hussein Amin raised fears over the weekend that descendants of those killed by American soldiers led by Gen. Leonard Wood in 1906 could seek revenge against the US troops.

Hussin said that even without a living witness, "there are descendants whose stories of the past were handed down generation to generation and I am one of them."

Hussin said his great-grandparents were slaughtered for a simple reason: they did not want to wave to the American flag and refused to get a "cedula" (citizen's certificate).

Hussin said he was "mature enough not to avenge such a horrible incident, but what about the others who were not schooled, who refused to accept the incident?"

"This is not a warning, we are just telling them the reality of the past," he added.

Abaya stressed that the American soldiers will only "train, assist and advise," while the Filipino troops "will lead, conduct and do the operation."

"This is a joint effort and the soldiers in Sulu who will undertake the training exercise will not run after the local innocent people but against the real enemies, the Abu Sayyaf Group," Abaya said.

Hussin had complained about the government's failure to consult ARMM officials and Sulu residents on the Balikatan exercises.

"Definitely, we object to using Sulu as training ground. We only welcome the socioeconomic component," he had said.

GMA friend manages . . .

From page A1

these discretionary funds are being used.

In addition, Jimenez will supervise some 200 foreign-funded projects nationwide worth $13 billion.

"It's a position of utmost trust," a Palace insider said.

Jimenez was formerly Ms Macapagal's appointments secretary in Malacañang. She was later appointed presidential assistant for ODA Absorption.

The source said Jimenez was supposed to be the President's original choice for chief of staff. "That's the reason why Mai-Mai was given the title of secretary. The title of adviser would be too low while a title of chief of staff for projects would make Tiglao less happy," the source said.

Two other sources familiar with the goings on in Malacañang have noted that Tiglao and Jimenez have been at odds over turf for some time. When sought for comment, Tiglao did not answer two calls placed on his mobile phone.

Under Administrative Order No. 62 dated Feb. 12, the President has granted Tiglao broad powers that range from managing her day-to-day schedule, public communications, strategic planning and policy formulation to monitoring government programs and projects.

Tiglao was supposed to be named "director general for communications" after his previous position as presidential spokesperson was given to then Press Secretary Ignacio "Toting" Bunye.

Bunye, in turn, was replaced as press secretary by former Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza, with whom Tiglao has a simmering feud.

While Tiglao got the title of chief of staff, he won't have control of government resources and projects. "If there's a real chief of staff, that's Jimenez," the source said.

Asked for details about priority programs Jimenez would be in charge of, the source said: "All priority programs identified by the major policy statements of the President."

This overlaps with one of the functions of Tiglao, which is "ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects being undertaken by the government."

The source said the President also tasked Jimenez with helping streamline the Office of the President. Jimenez has a staff of 50 based in the Palace and at the Ramon Magsaysay Building on Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

St. Luke's doctors fix Kitkat's heart

From page A1

heart operation and had sought help from INQUIRER readers earlier this month.

Among those who responded to the plea for help were the St. Luke's doctors.

On Feb. 14, Kitkat and her parents traveled all the way from Bukidnon to Manila so the girl could undergo a heart procedure.

Kitkat was suffering from a congenital heart disease called Atrial Septal Defect (ASD), a defect in the wall separating the two upper chambers of the heart. The hole has to be plugged, otherwise the lungs get flooded with blood and the heart may progressively enlarge and eventually fail.

But instead of an open-heart operation, Kitkat's doctors led by Dr. Jonas del Rosario used an Amplatzer device which did not require the opening up of the girl's chest.

Del Rosario, assisted by Drs. Charles Cuaso, Vince Aluquin and Theresa Menor implanted the Amplatzer device by inserting it through a vein in the right leg of Kitkat and navigating it to the heart. The device is then implanted in the heart to plug the hole and stays with the patient for life.

"The beauty of this technique is that we did not have to cut up Kitkat. Her recovery will be faster," said Del Rosario, a US-trained interventional pediatric cardiologist.

The operation took two hours.

"Patients usually go home from the hospital after 24 hours. Kids can go back to school after two to three days," Del Rosario said.

He said Kitkat was the 15th patient in the Philippines to undergo the procedure since it was first performed locally in August 2001.

"I hope Kitkat will be the living witness on how effective and safe this alternative treatment is," Del Rosario said.

Immediately after Kitkat arrived at the hospital, Del Rosario subjected her to a series of tests and found out she was a good candidate for an Amplatzer.

Today, Kitkat laughs a lot when visitors come to say hello and tell her funny stories.

"*Parang walang nangyari* (It's as if nothing happened to her)," Tessie said.

When the INQUIRER visited Kitkat at the St. Luke's pediatrics ward on Tuesday, Tessie was massaging the girl's head.

"She has a mild headache because she did not sleep much and ate just a little food," Tessie said.

Still, Kitkat smiled as the INQUIRER took pictures of her.

"God is so good to us! How can we thank all those who came to our aid? All our uncertainties vanished after many good Samaritans pledged to help us," Tessie said.

Tessie said she was keeping the text messages she received from concerned INQUIRER readers, many of whom wanted to remain anonymous.

"These truly made us cry and touched us deeply. We are (delighted) that people still bother to help in any way they can," she said.

Palace cool to criticism on lack of warm bodies

From page A1

Organizers of the event actually intended the Tuesday celebration to be "simple and not extravagant," according to President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

Asked whether the President was satisfied, Bunye said: "What we know is that the event is centered on the ecclesiastical celebration." It was an apparent reference to the Mass at the Edsa Shrine celebrated by Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin and attended by only an estimated 500 people, Ms Macapagal included.

Bunye pointed out that the President had been giving "meaning to the importance of People Power by holding consultations with the silent majority."

"She has been meeting daily with various groups as a way to celebrate People Power," Bunye said without giving details.

Bunye also dismissed calls for an investigation into how the People Power Commission had gone about its functions.

"There is no need," he said of the suggested probe into the commission formed by the government to oversee the yearly commemoration of the 1986 uprising that toppled the Marcos dictatorship.

On Tuesday, former President Fidel Ramos was appalled to see an "almost zero" turnout at the flag-raising ceremony at the People Power monument on Edsa.

He said the Macapagal administration's preparations for the 17th-anniversary commemoration were "so disappointing."

In a press statement issued yesterday, opposition Sen. Teresa Oreta noted the "celebration fatigue" and warned that the masses were "becoming increasingly frustrated over the government's failure to fulfill the promises of Edsa I."

Moro rebs step up offensives in South

From page A1

gawan and the Army's Seaborne Unit in Payao.

In the Payao attack, three soldiers and a civilian were slain while two other soldiers were wounded, according to Abaya.

But Col. Pedro Cesar Ramboanga, chief of the Army's 102nd Infantry Brigade based in Ipil town, said no soldier was killed when MILF rebels attacked the Seaborne detachment on Pandelusan Island off Payao town at around 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Ramboanga confirmed the death of a civilian when about 10 Moro rebels on board a motorized boat fired at the detachment. Two other "noncombatants" were wounded.

"The civilians were about to go on fishing when the encounter occurred. They were caught in the crossfire," Ramboanga said.

Two hours later, another band of MILF rebels attacked the outpost of the 33rd Infantry Battalion in Barangay Tigbabawan in Tungawan town. Ramboanga said the rebels failed to overran the detachment.

Ambush

As the encounter raged, another group of rebels, serving as blocking force, ambushed soldiers aboard two trucks and a Kennedy jeep from Barangay Binoangan, who were on their way to reinforce the embattled soldiers in Tigbabawan.

"Five of the reinforcing soldiers, including four members of the Moro National Liberation Front integrated into the military, were killed in the incident," Ramboanga said. Three other soldiers were wounded.

The names of the slain soldiers were being withheld but Ramboanga said their remains were brought back to their headquarters in Binoangan.

Reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo identified those wounded as Cpl. Celso Tubil, Cpl. Ronie Agabe and Pfc. Abdurajak Sapan.

Before the attacks on military positions in Tungawan and Payao towns in Zamboanga Sibugay, government forces clashed with about 30 suspected MILF members in Buldon, Maguindanao. The four-hour firefight resulted in the wounding of two MILF rebels and the recovery of two bolt assemblies for M-14 rilfes.

In a separate attack, about 30 suspected MILF rebels ambushed personnel of a private logging company in Siraway town in Zamboanga del Norte, killing the company mechanic and a forest guide, police said. Two other civilians were wounded and the assailants fled with an M-14 rifle.

Rebel casualties

In Tulunan, North Cotabato, MILF fighters clashed with Army soldiers and militiamen on the early morning of Monday. Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said an undetermined number of rebels were slain.

The attacks came a few days after suspected Moro rebels killed 14 people in Kalawit, Zamboanga del Norte.

Earlier, at least nine soldiers were killed in renewed hostilities in Lanao del Sur. "Strategically positioned in above ground along the winding and twisting Narciso Ramos highway, the MILF *mujahideen* let loose a hell of firepower that included several rocket grenades hitting their alert but willing human targets," Kabalu said of the ambush in Calanugas town on Feb. 24.

Besides firing at government positions, the MILF is attacking power lines. Armed men bombed a steel tower of Transco in Buluan town on Tuesday night.

The next attack occurred at around 3 a.m. yesterday in Kitangco, Datu Piang. MILF members burned down an electric post of the Maguindanao Electric cooperative.

Supt. Raul Gomez, Zamboanga Sibugay police chief, told the INQUIRER that the police, particularly in Ipil town, were on a heightened alert because of reports that rebels would launch an attack anytime. In 1995, the Abu Sayyaf, which is allegedly allied with the MILF, raided Ipil, killing more than 50 people.

Abaya expressed doubts that the MILF could sustain the attacks because of its limited logistics. "We will pound them hard until they realized that they could not match the government's firepower. We hope that our actions will lead to their surrender," he said. *Reports from Lullie Micabalo, Hernan de la Cruz, Edwin Fernandez, Rosa May de Guzman and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Martin P. Marfil in Manila; and AP*

Malacañang belittles Salamat call to arms

By Carlito Pablo
and Martin P. Marfil

MALACAÑANG yesterday belittled the call to arms of Hashim Salamat, chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, as it announced the release of P5 million for the development of the Buliok Complex in Pikit, North Cotabato, scene of recent fighting between MILF and government forces.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said calls for "jihad" (Islamic holy war) "have been aired but our Muslim brethren have largely ignored these extremist gestures."

Bunye noted that Salamat's call for Muslims to "fight till death" would not gain ground because "majority of Filipino Muslims are already in the mainstream of peace and democracy."

Despite the recent clashes, the MILF, the largest Moro rebel group in the country fighting for an Islamic state, said it wanted to end three decades of violence but would talk peace only through Malaysian mediators until the government withdrew troops from its stronghold in Pikit, North Cotabato.

"All communication in the meantime must be coursed through the mediating country Malaysia," MILF vice-chair for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar told local television. "The MILF has never abandoned a peaceful solution to the problem in Mindanao."

The MILF has held sporadic talks with the government aimed at ending violence that has killed 120,000 people since 1972.

But military intelligence analysts said the MILF did not want piece. They based their assessment on MILF documents seized from Buliok complex during a military offensive in Central Mindanao two weeks ago.

One document, called by military intelligence analysts as the MILF's "Action Plan for 2002," said the rebel group was planning a five-phase offensive aimed at expanding the war to "Christian areas."

"The offensive will bring the war to Christian areas that will cause psychological damage to a Christian-dominated Philippines," the report said.

The five phases call for the training of thousands of Muslims, including minors; putting up and strengthening MILF bases; launching sabotage operations against military installations; conducting ambuscades; and establishing large MILF guerilla forces in Christian areas to demoralize the populace.

"The action plan is strong evidence of (MILF) insincerity . . . It is a very systematic plan intended to attain victory in the future," the document said.

Malacañang is nevertheless receptive to talk peace with the MILF. Bunye said the government was calling on the MILF to return to the negotiating table to be mediated by countries with whom the Philippines has friendly relations.

For her part, President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a statement that she had released P5 million to "assist in the development plan" of the Buliok Complex (in Pikit, North Cotabato), from where Salamat was driven off during the military's offensive.

"What we want to do now, precisely, is when the evacuees go back to Buliok, we want them to go back not again to another no man's land," the President said at a meeting of the National Anti-Poverty Commission held in the Palace.

Ms Macapagal said that part of the development fund would be used for planting corn and palm oil.

She justified the military offensive in North Cotabato, saying the MILF did not abide by its agreement to help the government catch criminal elements like the Pentagon gang.

"Instead of helping us catch the kidnappers, they kept them there," President Macapagal said. "We have to enforce the law."

The President said that she had ordered a halt to hostilities in the area. She, however, noted that there were still skirmishes in the area because MILF forces were attacking soldiers engaged in dismantling mines.

Last night, Bunye described as "fabrication" a supposed "letter of instruction" issued by the President instructing Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to capture the Buliok Complex.

Bunye said the fake letter of instruction was meant to enflame Muslim sentiments against the Macapagal administration.

The order supposedly directed the military to capture Salamat dead or alive at all costs.

Bush: War doesn't need UN approval

From page A1

"Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed. He may play like he's going to disarm but he hasn't disarmed," Bush told reporters. "We expect the Security Council to honor its word by insisting that Saddam disarm."

Bush said he still hoped the Security Council would pass US-backed resolution implicitly authorizing war. "It would be helpful and useful, but I don't believe we need a second resolution," he said.

More threats

As if the threat of war wasn't frightening enough, Bush also warned Saddam and his top generals that they would be tried as war criminals if hostilities broke out.

"If they take innocent life, if they destroy infrastructure, they will be held accountable as war criminals," Bush said.

White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer offered a grimmer scenario: Saddam and his inner circle would be legitimate targets for US forces.

"If we go to war in Iraq and hostilities result . . . people in charge of fighting the war to kill the United States troops cannot assume they will be safe . . . of course including Saddam Hussein," Fleischer said.

A 1976 ban on assassinating foreign leaders was put into place by President Gerald R. Ford in response to criticism of CIA-backed plots in the 1960s and 1970s. President Ronald Reagan extended the executive order in 1981 to include hired assassins. Bush could overturn the ban by signing a document, but Fleischer declined to say whether the president was considering doing so.

Saddam interview

Saddam, however, said he would rather die than leave his country, dismissing recent suggestions by US and Arab leaders that he could go into exile to avoid war.

"We will die here. We will die in this country and we will maintain our honor—the honor that is required . . . in front of our people," Saddam said in an interview with CBS News anchorman Dan Rather.

The US television network reported excerpts of the interview on its website Tuesday night, and said the comments would air Wednesday on its TV newsmagazine "60 Minutes II."

"Whoever decides to forsake his nation from whoever requests is not true to the principles," Saddam said. "I believe that whoever . . . offers Saddam asylum in his own country is in fact a person without morals."

Bush said last month that he would welcome Saddam Hussein going into exile and some Arab countries, most notably Saudi Arabia, had proposed offering Saddam exile to avoid a war.

During the interview, Saddam also denied any links to Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida terror network and indicated he would not set fire to Iraq's oil fields or destroy its dams in the event of a US-led invasion.

"Iraq does not burn its wealth and it does not destroy its dams," Saddam said.

He said that Iraq had never had any relationship to al-Qaida terrorists, "and I think that Mr. Bin Laden himself has recently, in one of his speeches, given such an answer that we have no relation with him."

Iraqi weapons

In a part of the interview that aired earlier Tuesday on the CBS Evening News, the Iraqi president indicated he wouldn't heed a UN demand to destroy Iraq's Al Samoud 2 missiles and said his missiles didn't exceed ranges allowed by the United Nations.

But Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz insisted Tuesday that the government had not yet decided whether to destroy its Al Samoud 2 missiles. "It's being studied," Aziz said.

"Readiness for the aggression is continuing . . . but this doesn't mean that we should stop our political and diplomatic work," Aziz said. "We should continue with it, but we should also prepare ourselves for battle."

Both Iraqi and UN officials spoke of new, substantive cooperation. UN inspectors visited a pit where Iraq said it destroyed biological weapons in 1991, and Baghdad reported finding two R-400 aerial bombs that could be filled with biological or chemical agents at a disposal site.

Blix said one of the R-400 bombs was filled with "a liquid that appears to be biological."

Some progress

"We have made some progress. In fact, we have made some breakthroughs," said Lt. Gen. Amer al-Saadi, Saddam's adviser on the inspections.

Iraq appeared to be sending conflicting messages over an order from Blix to begin destroying its Al Samoud 2 missiles and their components by the end of the week because the missiles can fly farther than the allowed 150 km.

The missiles are still being produced and tested, the inspectors' spokesperson in Baghdad, Hiro Ueki, said Tuesday. He said the last test took place Monday.

Al-Saadi also said Iraq was still studying the UN missile order. He said he would not comment on the Saddam interview because he had not seen it.

Shift to US position

While UN inspectors awaited Bagdad's response to the missile order, Mexico appeared to be the first among a handful of undecided UN Security Council members to shift toward the US position on Iraq.

The change in policy for Mexico—one of the most outspoken supporters of continued weapons inspections instead of war—was first presented in a key address by Mexican President Vicente Fox on Tuesday and then outlined in a new and confidential foreign policy directive obtained by The Associated Press.

The United States currently has the support of Britain, Spain and Bulgaria but is struggling to find the other five votes it needs in the 15-member council.

France, Russia, Germany and China all support continued weapons inspections, while Pakistan and Syria, two Muslim countries on the council, are not expected to support the resolution. That leaves the United States fishing for the support of Angola, Guinea, Cameroon, Mexico and Chile. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

HK slashes maids' monthly salary by $51 . . .

From page A1

Drilon branded the Hong Kong government's decision as "totally unjust."

"This act is clearly discriminatory," Drilon said, noting that the reduction of the minimum wage affected only foreign domestic workers.

Drilon said the wage cut was also discriminatory to women, who comprise 95 percent of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong.

He said the wage cut would translate into a loss of a total of HK$720 million in remittances from Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong.

Tsang said the move, along with other revenue-generating measures, was necessary to address the government's budget deficit, as well as ease the impact of the economic slowdown on the Hong Kong middle class.

Tsang also announced that beginning Oct. 1, a levy of HK$9,600 would be imposed on employers hiring foreign domestic helpers. The amount will be paid in four equal installments.

Employers applying for foreign maids would have to pay the first installment, which is not refundable if they failed to get a new applicant within four months.

In 1999, the Hong Kong government slashed by 5 percent the HK$3,860 minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers.

As Tsang was meeting with the lawmakers, some 30 protesters from the Asian Migrant Coordinating Body (AMCB), a coalition of domestic helpers from the Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka, picketed in front of the Legislative Council in Central District.

Carrying banners and placards, the protesters took turns in condemning the Hong Kong government and Tsang, calling them "cruel, shameful and unjust."

AMCB chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said "the Hong Kong government is worse than thieves. . . their cruelty is beyond measure."

Regalado said AMCB would ask the Philippine government to lodge a diplomatic protest and convince countries sending workers to Hong Kong to do the same.

Filipino domestic helper, Sol Pillas, 44, said the Hong Kong government's decision was outrageous. "The reduction in our wages amounts to stealing our food," said Pillas, who has been in Hong Kong for 17 years.

She said the HK$400-wage cut would reduce the money she was spending during her holidays. Pillas spends more than 50 percent of her salary in Hong Kong.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia met with Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa for a last-minute appeal to stop the wage cut, but told members of the Filipino community that "I don't expect them (Hong Kong officials) to change their minds."

IT'S OFFICIAL: Speaker Jose de Venecia and Consul General Victoria Bataclan check out a newspaper report on the HK$400 levy on foreign domestic helpers.

DANTE PERALTA/PINOY ABROAD

De Venecia was meeting with Tung when Tsang was at the Legislative Council.

Drilon said Filipino domestic workers and the Philippine government should avail themselves of judicial remedies before the Hong Kong courts and international bodies like the International Labor Organization.

Noel Josue, president of the Kaibigan ng mga OCWs, said the cut would adversely affect the families of the maids in the Philippines.

The wage cut, about P2,772, could be equivalent to a whole month's allowance for children in school or the budget for grocery of a lower middle income family, according to Josue.

"This is a double whammy for foreign maids in Hong Kong," said Migrante president Poe Gratela.

The Department of Labor and Employment said earlier that the government was considering suspending the deployment to Hong Kong if the wage rate was cut or a levy was imposed. *With reports from Gerald Lacuarta and Blanche S. Rivera*

Retired US general calls military strategy 'criminal'

From page A1

"Don't base a strategy on using air or special forces only for a few days and—bam!—the ground forces are going, ready or not, because all you're doing is asking the mothers and fathers of American or coalition allies to lose more sons and daughters," he said.

"Our strategy is wrong. It is risking more lives than necessary," he said. "When you do not permit special forces and the air capability and technology you have to accomplish the maximum before you start heading ground forces in a 'Roman Legion' fashion toward objectives, you're asking for disaster."

Richard Perle, an AEI senior fellow who is an influential Republican adviser to the Pentagon, said he was also worried that "the pressure for rapidly concluding a military engagement is always a danger."

Republican Guard

US war plans call for more than 3,000 guided bombs and missiles to rip into Iraqi military and leadership targets in the first 48 hours.

According to defense officials, the air war would last less than a week and cause such a shock that Iraqi military would collapse prompting the surrender of thousands of troops. One aim would be to minimize civilian casualties.

But Glosson said the The United States was ignoring lessons from the 1991 Gulf War. He was director of air campaign plans, based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War and is the author of a new book, "War with Iraq: Critical Lesson."

A two-pronged ground offensive from Kuwait in the south and Turkey in the north would begin simultaneously or within days of the start of the air attack.

Glosson, who now heads a private international investment firm and has just completed a five-year term as an adviser to the CIA director, aimed his fault-finding at military planners, not President George W. Bush or Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

"There seems almost a reluctance to criticize military leaders. Well, I'm a military professional ... and I believe it's an obligation of the military professionals to speak their minds and the truth when they don't believe military decisions are headed in the right direction," he said.

Glosson said the US military was underestimating the strength of the Republican Guard and other special Iraqi forces, and pursuing a war plan that would force Saddam to garrison these units in cities and, when they moved out of cities, cause them to use weapons of mass destruction.

US forces are ready to go to war against Iraq and have the technological capacity to accomplish in 24 hours to 36 hours what it took seven days to accomplish in 1991, Glosson said.

But "we've absolutely got to force ourselves to develop a strategy that isolates the Republican Guard and those special forces and we've got to have the patience to let that isolation and that destruction take place," he said.

The Republican Guard should be "obliterated," Glosson added.

He also argued strongly against attempts to minimize Iraqi civilian casualties if it meant incurring more losses among US and allied military personnel.

"I don't believe there is ever a situation when that is acceptable," he said. *Reuters*

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SPORTS

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Lottery begins at Match Play

CARLSBAD, California--Tiger Woods usually tees it up on the first day of a tournament with the intention of winning. Expectations are a little different this week. "You just try to advance," Woods said Tuesday. The name of the tournament is the Match Play Championship, but it might as well be the lottery, especially considering the seeds of the last four winners: 24, 19, 55, 62. *AP*

CANLUBANG LEADS PAL INTERCLUB

Rosal registers 1st double-eagle

By Al S. Mendoza

DAVAO CITY–Abe Rosal made history yesterday by scoring the first double-eagle in PAL Interclub history, 56 years to the day the fabled tournament was born.

Rosal's feat helped power Canlubang to a 3-point lead over Manila Southwoods, showing sparks of a close finish in this event acknowledged as the national team golf championship.

The 40-year-old Rosal sank a 218-yard, 7-wood after his tee shot sailed 302 yards on No. 12 of Palos Verdes.

That was worth 6 points in the PAL scoring system that gives 5 points to a hole-in-one, 4 to an eagle, 3 to a birdie, 2 to a par and 1 to a bogey.

Rosal totaled 37 points (1-under-par 72) to stay second in the scoring parade of Canlubang. Top scorer was J.R. Tanpinco with 38, and Juvic Pagunsan and Jun Bernis 33s. Ronnie Torrecampo had a no-count 28.

Their 141 was 3 points up on Manila Southwoods, whose 138 was bannered by Toro Nakajima. Nakajima got support from Hanson So Jr. with 34, and Jerome Delariarte and Mark Lopez with 33s.

Recent acquisition Gene Bondoc had a no-count 29 in the five-to-play, four-to-count format in the four-day event sponsored by 105.1 Crossover, ABS-CBN Global, Air Philippines, Airbus, CNN International, Fortune Tobacco, GE Aircraft Engines, Joey 92.3, MTV Philippines, PLDT, Premier wine and Spirits, Radio Mindanao Network, Royal Caribbean International, The Marco Polo Davao and UMBN/ Mindanao Times.

Running third in the Championship Division behind Canlubang and Southwoods was Del Monte with 129. Luisita faltered with 119 for fourth spot.

"It's a good start and we expected it to be close on the first day because the teams can really score here at Palos Verdes," said Luigi Yulo, the Canlubang team captain. "We didn't expect to pull away even if we fielded in a strong team because the other teams also came up with strong line-ups. It will be a different story when we move to Apo."

Cebu Country Club led the Founders Division with 128 over Iligan (116) and Lanang (114) in the series that has 96.3Wrock, Apo View Hotel and Boeing International Corp. as corporate sponsors.

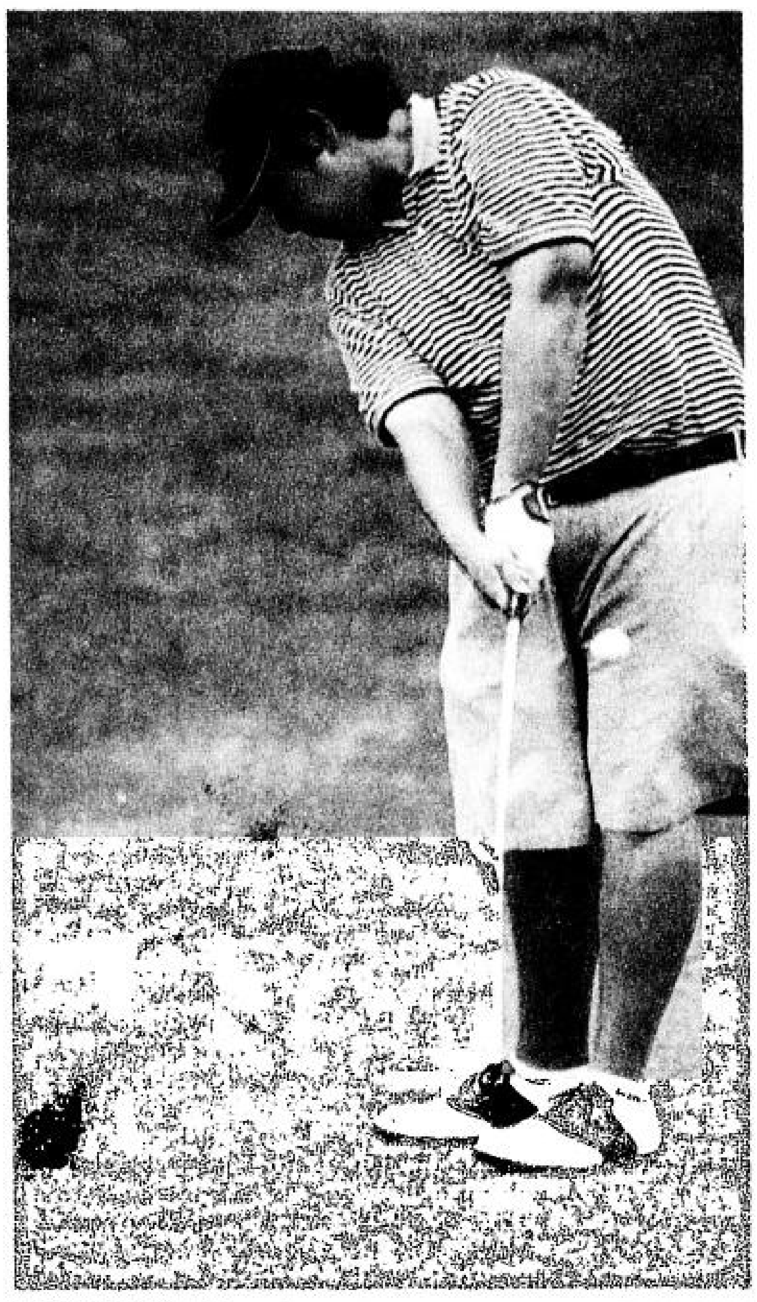
Team L.A. had 96 to pace the Sportswriters over Apo (91) and Zamboanga (88) in the event that also drew the support of Accel Sports Gear, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Tanduay Rhum, Taylor Made, Nestle Philippines and Discovery Channel.

The complete results were still being collated at presstime.

Partial results:

Founders–Riviera 112, Manila Golf Club 110, Forest Hills 108, Camp Evangelista 107, John Hay 97, Pueblo de Oro, 95, Palos Verdes 92, Navy 82, Bacolod 74, Stanford 74, Vicmico 61, Greenhills West 59.

Sportswriters–Apo 91, Zamboanga 88, Iloilo 85, Davao 85, Paoay 84, Lumbia 84, British Columbia 81, Leyte 79, Crystal Springs 79, San Juanico 75, Alta Vista 74, Capitol 73, Bay Area 69, Golfinos 69, Club filipino 64, Pittsburg 60, PGA San Jose 60, Saudi Aramco 54, Heritage 54, Intramuros 69, FGA Riyadh 49, Guinhalaran 48, Cotabato 47, Fil-Am Fairfield 43, Fil-Oz 41, Moffet Flelt 41, Brookside 40, Seattle 36.



TANPINCO: Canlubang topscorer.

ROGER MARGALLO

The man who owns Davao

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

DAVAO CITY-They follow the rules here to the letter. No, they heed Mayor Duterte's Law like kids in a kindergarten class.

No smoking in public places and you see no one smoking in public places.

No urinating in public places and you see no one urinating in public places.

Move over, Erap.

Over here, there is no *kumpa-kumpare*.

Over here, there is no *kaibi-kaibigan*.

Over here, there is no Kamag-anak, Inc.

We love to talk about leaders being real leaders, you have Mayor Rody Duterte as the supreme epitome.

Duterte leads by example. He governs without fear or favor. He has lost friends, including some of his boyhood chums. He is now despised by some of his *kumpadres*. Some of his own relatives have started disowning him.

"I don't care if I lose their friendship, their love," he told friends some nights back at the After Dark. "I am here for the good of the people."

After Dark, a cozy piano bar, is the mayor's favorite haunt here. Once he goes there, he croons such immortals as "Windmills of Your Mind" and "McArthur's Park." Minus a songbook at that.

"I love it here because the pianist is good," he said. "But do you know that there's a whale of a difference between a pianist and an accompanist?"

Duterte said he started smoking at the age of 14. After he had stopped smoking some years ago, the mayor, fifty-ish, said he would soon find himself "coughing like hell" if he stood near a smoker with a lighted cigarette.

"It's never too late to quit the habit," he said. "But the real trouble with this habit is, it inflicts harm to both the smoker and the non-smoker. As a smoker, you are not only killing yourself but also the one next to you. That's unfair. Medical science has proven that second-hand smoke is more dangerous than the smoke being inhaled by the smoker."

But the mayor has not really totally killed smoking in his turf. He has ordered establishments like hotels and restaurants to erect designated spots for smokers.

"Because I cannot stop everybody from wanting to die by smoking, I have required establishments to put up designated areas for smokers," he said.

Oh, yes, once in a while you see some brave souls breaking Duterte's Law. But once they get caught, they face the consequences or either a jail term or an exorbitant fine, or both.

Some days ago, the police arrested 338 persons smoking in public. The story was page-one stuff of a local daily.

My experience though since I arrived here for the PAL Interclub golf championship is, I hear people yelling at persons trying to sneak in a smoke or two to stop it. Overall, I see many people supporting Duterte's campaign to ban the public display of smoking in his city and urinating in public places. Generally speaking, even the city's big shots obey Duterte's rules.

This city is the world's biggest but the man who owns it is barely 5-foot-7, and very soft-spoken.

You gotta see him to believe it. And next believe in him.

Webb eyeing Aussie 'triple'

SYDNEY, Australia--Karrie Webb is aiming to be the first triple champion of the US$300,000 women's Australian Open when she defends her title starting Thursday at the Terrey Hills Golf Club in Sydney.

Webb, who won the women's Australian Open when it was held at Yarra Yarra in Victoria state last year and in 2000, bogeyed the last hole at the Australian Ladies Masters last weekend on the Gold Coast to give that title to England's Laura Davies.

It was her return to the circuit after an extended Christmas break. *AP*

Bataan chessers prevail

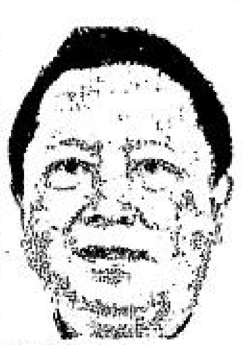
TEAM Bataan successfully retained its title in the Metropolitan Chess Association (MCA) Amateur League after drawing its final round match with Linares de Marikina Sunday at the Lotus Garden Hotel in Padre Faura corner Mabini, Ermita, Manila.

Bankrolled by Gov. Leonardo Ding Roman, Bataan has not dropped a match throughout the nine-round tournament organized by MCA headed by Mila Emperado. With 19.5 points to show, Bataan claimed the P50,000 top purse and a trophy to be awarded on March 4 also at the Lotus Garden.

PNP Towers (17.5) halved points with RCBC (17) in the final round to grab second place worth P30,000 while the latter settled for third and the P20,000 prize.

Early rounds co-leader Dar Obet's Movers finished fourth with 16.5 points for P15,000. Pasigcity.com, DLSU-Sta. Ana and Team Bol-Anon, CMI Realty and Linares de Marikina shared fifth to ninth places with similar 15.5 scores for P6,400 each. Data Access Enterprises completed the top ten after submitting 15 points to take home P5,000.

DepEd backs Lanao Palaro set May 4-11



DIMAPORO

EDUCATION Secretary Edilberto C. De Jesus has thrown his support to the staging of the 2003 Palarong Pambansa on May 4-11 at the world-class Mindanao Civic Center in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

Despite the fact that running the Palaro is already in the hands of the Philippine Sports Commission, De Jesus assured the total cooperation of the 14 DepEd regional directors who are traditionally in charge of the delegations.

Appearing as guest speaker during the DepEd national management committee meeting recently, the secretary also praised the MCC facilities, which was built intentionally for Palaro to the tune of P500 million.

De Jesus even tried out the newly completed 4,000-seter MCC multi-purpose gym by shooting basketballs alongside Lanao del Norte Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo, who will host the Games along with wife, Lanao del Norte Gov. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo.

De Jesus' support was greatly appreciated especially now that the PSC is trying to steer the Palaro into local government-based Games similar to the Philippine National Youth Games-Batang Pinoy starting next year.

The DepEd traditionally runs the preparation of the delegations because they have the hands-on control over the students and teachers who take part in the annual event.

But PSC chair Eric Buhain has been in support of an LGU-based Palaro because it was the LGUs themselves who manage the preparation in the grassroots level before the DepEd regional offices would take over in the actual Games.

Taguig upends Spring

FORWARD Taguig outsteadied Spring Cooking Oil in double overtime to win 94-92 and share the lead with Ozamiz's Shineway Ham Sausage and Cebu's M. Lhuillier in the Luzon leg of the National Basketball League (NBL) first regional championship at the University of Assumption gym in San Fernando, Pampanga.

Jimmy Robillos and Robin Mendoza knocked in the winning points in the last 30 seconds after Taguig and Spring had battled to 74-74 and 86-86 ties at the end of regulation and in the extension period.

With its third win in four games, Taguig maintained top spot with Shineway, which tripped Pampanga's UA, 92-86, and Lhuillier, which toppled Wang's 76-66.

Former PBA stars Zaldy Realubit and Mike Orquillas led the Jewellers with 18 and 17 points respectively, while Egay Echavez, Jerry Jaca and Dennis Cabigkis starred for Shineway with 23, 19 and 18.

The scores:

TAGUIG 94-Mendoza 29, Robillos 24, Constantino 11, Macanig 7, Cahanding 5, Nuqui 5, Bernardino 4, Victoria 3, Racho 2, Lozano 2, Magsalin 2, Baluyot 0.

SPRING 92-Ricafuerte 17, Reyes 17, Espiritu 11, Bautista 11, Manuel 10, Buendia 8, Ybanez 7 , Sanz 6, Edelito Saygo 5.

Quarters: 20-14, 39-44, 51-61, 74-74, 86-86, 94-92.

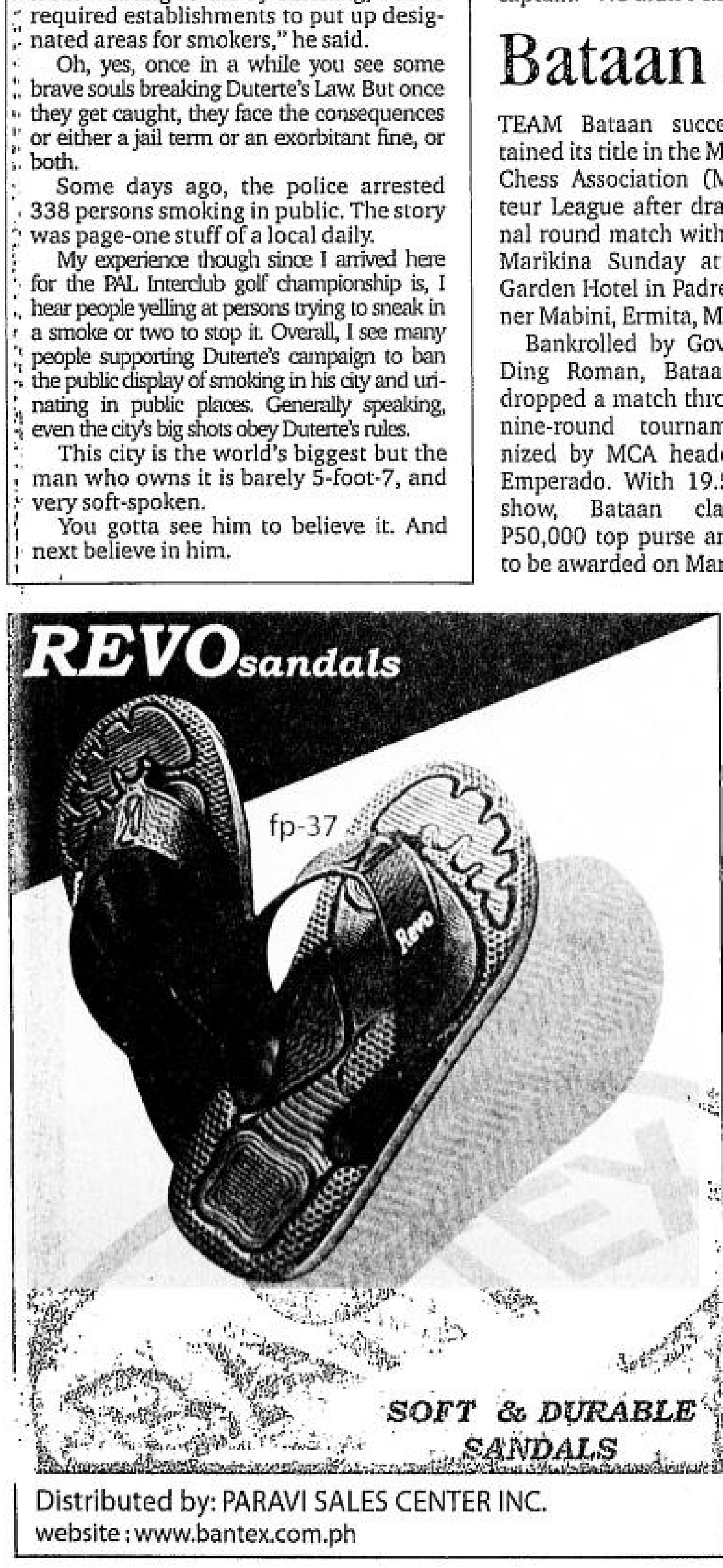
BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1994, Jennifer Rosales shot a 77 to post a one-stroke victory over Kiwi Lisa Aldridge in the Thailand Open.

Youth triathlon slated March 9

THE CULMINATING leg that will determine the 2002 age group champions of the Fit & Tri Youth Triathlon circuit is slated on March 9 at the Narra Park inside Ayala Alabang Village with close to a hundred 18-and-below triathletes expected to participate. Sponsored by Smart Simply Amazing and organized by the Firstwave Events Inc., the race will have competitions in three different age categories, 7 to 10, 11 to 14, and 15 to 18 years old for both boys and girls.

The main event will be the triathlon, where the youngest group participants will swim 100 meters, bike 2 kilometers, and run 1 kilometer, according to event director Lito Fugoso. Entry forms are available at the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) office at Philsports, in all Speedo Concept stores in Alabang, Megamall, Robinson's Galleria and Ermita, and E-group http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ridgetri. Registration fees may be deposited to Firstwave Events Inc. I-Bank C.A., no. 017030004450 and deposit slips can be faxed to 895-6548 where inquiries can also be made.



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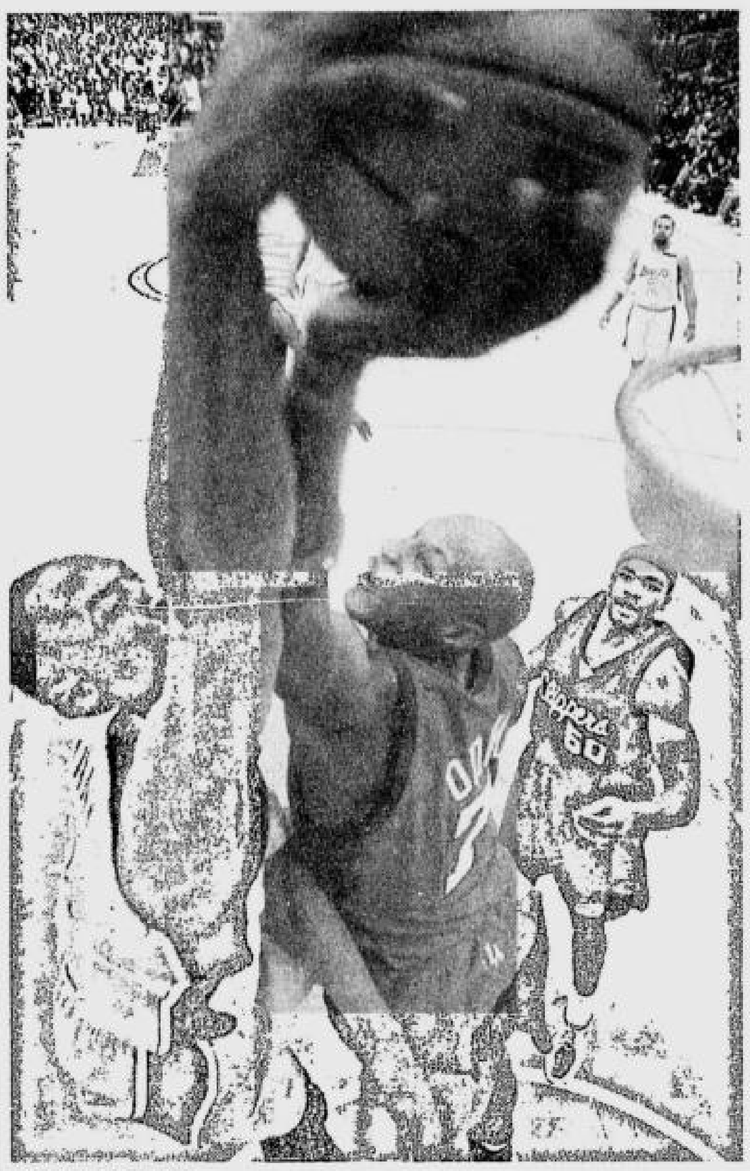
RACING AWARDS

Well-known horseowners Hermie Esguerra (right) and Sandy Javier show the trophies they won during the 5th Gintong Lahi Awards Monday night at the Dreambar in Makati. Esguerra was named Horseowner of the Year (2002). He also took home trophies for Horse of the Year (Wind Blown), Champion Older Horse (Wind Blown) and Juvenile Colt Champion (High Octane). Javier, on the other hand, was named Breeder of the Year and got another award for Stallion of the Year (Hazm).

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

TAULAVA, PEÑA CLEARED

PBA bares penalties for drug users



KOBE FOILED
Lamar Odom of the LA Clippers (right) blocks a shot by LA Lakers' Kobe Bryant during their NBA game Tuesday night. Bryant's remarkable scoring streak ended, but he still helped the Lakers win for the 12th time in 14 games. Bryant scored 32 points in the Lakers' 109-98 victory. Complete results: Orlando 98, Dallas 93; Cleveland 93, New Jersey 90; Washington 83, Indiana 78; New York 102, Houston 95; San Antonio 84, Miami 69; Sacramento 81, Detroit 75; Portland 89, Atlanta 86; LA Lakers 109, LA Clippers 98. AFP

By June Navarro

HOUNDED by drug-related problems found on the medical results on some of its players, the Philippine Basketball Association has imposed penalties for future offenders.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said a player found positive of taking the banned substances for the first time would automatically be suspended for two games and asked to clear his name before the cager could again see action in the league.

Second-time offenders are bound to face suspension no less than 45 days accompanied by a rehabilitation program in the hope of saving the career of the player from disgrace.

Breaching the rules the third time around, the player will immediately be banned from the league, a norm installed by the Commissioner's Office to purge the league of drug dependents.

Eala also bared that every now and then the league would conduct random tests on players in order to prevent them from transgressing the rules set by the Office of the Commissioner with respect to drug-related cases.

The PBA's concern on the handling of drug-dependent cagers was triggered by the medical results of two Fil-foreign players who were tested positive for marijuana use.

The urine samples of Asi Taulava of Talk N Text and San Miguel Beer's Dorian Peña submitted during the initial testing had proven their guilt.

But Eala said Taulava and Peña, who are serving two-game suspensions, have already been cleared and secured a professional license issued by the Games and Amusements Board.

The GAB also issued licenses to the three players who were found to have been suffering from hepatitis diagnosed during the medical tests conducted by the PBA three weeks ago.

Meanwhile, Shell averted a final-quarter meltdown to beat Talk N Text, 77-74, last night in the PBA-Samsung All Filipino Cup at the Philsports Arena.

Barangay Ginebra rallied from 17 points down and turned back Purefoods, 84-76, in the second game.

Jun Limpot sizzled for 30 points and 10 rebounds while getting a lot of help from rookies Sunday Salvacion, Romel Adducul and Aries Dimaunahan.

GAMES TOMORROW *(Makati Coliseum)*
5:00 p.m.—Red Bull vs FedEx
7:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs San Miguel

UPHR-Laguna dribblers enter q'finals

By Roy Luarca

LEGASPI CITy—UPHR-Laguna leaned on Kemuel Proseso's steady play to nip University of Mindanao, 66-63, yesterday and enter the quarterfinals of the 57th National Students Basketball Championships at the Albay Astrodome here.

Proseso scored a team-high 17 points, including two assurance freethrows with seven seconds to go, that pushed UPHR in the company of defending champion St. Francis of Assisi in the collegiate division's round-of-eight.

The Southern Tagalog bets wound up with a 2-1 record while the Wildcats of Davao bowed out at 1-2 in Group B. St. Francis holds a 2-0 mark and is expected to cruise past also-ran Luzon University (0-2) late yesterday.

Angeles University Foundation also advanced with a 91-70 drubbing of Bicol College in Group C. AUF finished at 1-1, behind NCAA titlist San Sebastian College.

The SSC Stags and the University of the East Warriors, the Bantay Bata and Challenge to Champions titlist, made the quarterfinals with victories late Tuesday.

San Sebastian, powered by 6-foot-7 Pep Moore, routed Bicol College, 110-65, while UE dumped Southern City College, 130-56, for its second straight win in Group A.

Other quarterfinalists are PMI, which whipped Aquinas, 112-70, also Tuesday and the University of Visayas Lancers. The Admirals and the Lancers are disputing the Group D top spot at presstime.

In secondary play, San Beda College swept its elimination assignments with an 82-66 victory over Iloilo Chinese Commercial High School at the DWCL gym.

Joseph Casio topscored with 31 points for San Beda in the game which featured the battle inside the paint between San Beda's Claiford Arao and ICCHS's Kenneth Bono. The 6-foot-5 Bono outscored Arao, 30-19, but Arao, also 6-foot-5, held him to eight points in the second half.

A one-minute silent prayer was observed at the Astrodome in memory of BAP chair Cong. Antonio Abaya, who died yesterday morning. His body will be flown to Isabela Province.

Meanwhile, the BAP headed by Tiny Literal will hold its national congress here today. Expected to attend are secretary general Graham Lim, vice president Christian Tan, auditor Tony Fabico and the regional directors.

Hontiveros, NSAs meet

PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee first vice president Steve Hontiveros yesterday started his task of screening athletes going to the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games in December by meeting one-on-one with four national sports association heads.

This despite the calls for him to resign over the faux pas regarding the true criteria to be used in the selection process.

Hontiveros and his committee co-chair Julian Camacho of wushu started talking with presidents of the athletics, aquatics, archery, badminton and basketball associations to know the scope of their participation in the SEAG.

Camacho will act as the chief of mission, while judo's Reynaldo Jaylo and table tennis' Vic Valbuena will be the assistant chiefs of mission to the two venues, namely, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

They will next survey presidents of boxing, canoeing, cycling, fencing and football tomorrow, while gymnastics, judo, karatedo, rowing, sepak takraw will be up on March 3.

Marc Anthony Reyes

LCC Leonard derby on today

THE "LCC Leonard 7-Cock Derby" championship round unfolds today and derby fans are expected to troop back again to Mandaluyong Coliseum to witness this rare showdown of Metro Manila and provincial derby champions.

Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc.

To make sure that another jampacked crowd will watch the event, derby host Louie Cua said the general admission fee today is only P250.

From a field of 39, three entries racked up three sizzling victories each last Tuesday. They were Patrick and Max Roxas of Tarlac (Paniqui Coliseum 3-Cock March 13), Ding Kar (April 5 Play For the Pot) and Boy de Roca and engineer Joe Go (Sir Arthur).

Strikingly close with 2.5 points are former Mayor Jessie Viceo and de Roca (BL San Rafael) and the dangerous tandem of Boy Marzo and Philip Talamor (BM Bulalayaw).

The following entries posted two points each: BL Diane, Roligon Mega Promotion R and W, LCC PE BR Pasay May 2, Flyover, Firebird, NBA.Com Mexico, Casino Mactan Cebu 4.2M, Bongbong, KGR, Clu Majestic, Legazpi Col. May 10 and 11, Tintin at Sabel.

"It's still anybody's race for the title," Cua said. For other information, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Sir Louie 2. Alert One 3. Gallop for Gold

Race 2--1. Ocean Magic 2. Respect the Ace 3. Hummingbird 4. Private Pedro 5. Blink & Wink

Race 3--1. Rolex 2. Aim and Fire/Wine and Roses

Race 4--1. Star Material 2. Stout Hearted 3. Royal Magic 4. Pangako Sa 'Yo 5. Ilocos Princess 6. Golden Snakehotdog

Race 5--1. Major Leaguer 2. Laughing Matter/Schwarzenegger 3. Bullhorn

Race 6--1. Fire 2. Never Quit 3. Key to Heaven 4. Sky Wind 5. Katya

Race 7--1. Hurricane Doding 2. Wynona Raider 3. Feng Shui

Race 8--1. Princess Jonnalyn 2. Supreme Prospect 3. Bull Strike

Race 9--1. Korek Ka Dyan 2. King Aldrin 3. Silver Dollar 4. Ebony Starr 5. Epic Energy

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Suns vs Bucks, 9 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.), Nets vs Knicks (Game 3, 1994 1st Round), 12 noon (r - 5 p.m.), Nets vs Knicks, 7 p.m., IBC 13

TENNIS: Kroger St. Jude, 4:30 p.m. (r), Star Sports

POOL: Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. (r) and 10 p.m., Star Sports

More join 'Largahan' 5-cock tilt

THE LIST of confirmed entries to the much-awaited "P1 Million Largahan 5-Cock Derby" of Roligon Mega Cockpit continues to build-up as the prize-rich event nears and the total number of participants is expected to exceed the 100 mark.

Set on March 4, 6 and 8, the three-day tussle to be hosted by resurgent promoter Rolly Ligon stakes a guaranteed prize of P1 million for a very affordable entry fee of P5,500 and minimum bet of P3,300.

A P100,000 prize per day will go to elimination round champions. The three-cock finals is set on March 8. Submission of weights is strictly one day before the event, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., said manager Roming Vergara.

Meanwhile, the "Best of the Best One-Cock Ulutan" is all set on Sunday, March 2, with about 180 entries expected to join. To be promoted by Royal Farm and Piyeza Group, the event offers P12,000 to the fastest champion; second, P8,000; third, P6,000; fourth, P5,000; fifth, P5,000; sixth, P3,000, seventh, P2,000; eighth and ninth, P1,500 and slowest kill, P1,250.

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RAZON MEMORIAL

Rosales moves up by 1 over LaO

By Jong Arcano

KNOWING where and when to strike, Gerald Rosales is suddenly back into the consciousness of his fellow local pros.

Rosales, playing his first local event in almost two years, inched ahead in the race for a million-peso paycheck after battling the swirling winds with a two-under-par 70 yesterday in the Don Pocholo Razon Memorial golf tournament at The Country Club in Laguna.

The 26-year-old Rosales recovered from a sluggish start by knocking in five consecutive birdies from the seventh as the former Philippine Open champion snatched a one-stroke lead over rookie pro Cookie LaO with his 142 aggregate for 36 holes.

The scintillating birdie run put the young Rosales, who was last seen in last year's Philippine Open at Wack Wack, in the hunt for another big payday a week after he banked P1.1 million for a ninth place showing in the Malaysian Masters in Kuala Lumpur.

Rosales was not even supposed to be in the field.

After his entry for Myanmar was refused when he registered past the deadline, Rosales flew in from Malaysia Monday and teed off at The Country Club on Tuesday without the benefit of a practice round.

LaO added a 71 to his first round 72 to be at 143 while another rookie pro Angelo Que carded another 72 like Tony Lascuña to end another windy day and tied for third at 144.

ROSALES

The three first day leaders, Cassius Casas, Mars Pucay and Benjie Magada, faded in different stages of the round and gave way to the two young guns to set the pace. Pucay and Casas both had 75s for joint sixth place at 146 while Magada had deeper crash, his 78 sending him down to 12th in a tie with Richard Sinfuego.

Frankie Miñoza managed to tie for the last two places in the 20-man cut-off for the last two rounds with his 73-152.

Rosales seems to have quickly fine-tuned his game to the demands of the exclusive club after Tuesday's play.

Already two over through the first six holes on three bogeys and a birdie, Rosales went wild with his five-birdie rampage, four of which came from within four feet. He ended the day with a sorry bogey on the 18th where he missed a short four-footer for par.

The scores:

142 - G. Rosales 72-70
143 - C. LaO 72-71
144 - A. Que 72-72, A. Lascuña 72-72
145 - R. Pagunsan 76-69
146 - M. Pucay 71-75
147 - R. Sasutil 75-72
148 - R. Pactolerin 73-75, E. Bagtas 76-72, D. Cruz 78-70
149 - R. Sinfuego 74-75, B. Magada 71-78

Bukidnon golf tourney on tap

THE PROVINCE of Bukidnon will celebrate the Kaamulan Festival, an ethnic festival featuring Bukidnon's seven hilltribes and one of the events lined up is the 1st Bukidnon Kaamulan Amateur Golf Open, which will be held at the Classic Del Monte Golf Club on March 6, 7 and 8.

Format of play is two days medal play with best 18 holes to count and with full handicap. Imported trophies await the winners for both men's and ladies' in seven class divisions, and home appliances for lucky raffle winners.

Proceeds of the tournament will go to Gov. Nonoy Zubiri's Bukidnon Sports Hall of Fame project aimed to honor Bukidnon's sons and daughters who excelled in their various field of sports.

For details, contact Bella Quimpo (0920-5263803) or Norman Tugot (09189344927), chair of the organizing committee.

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METRO
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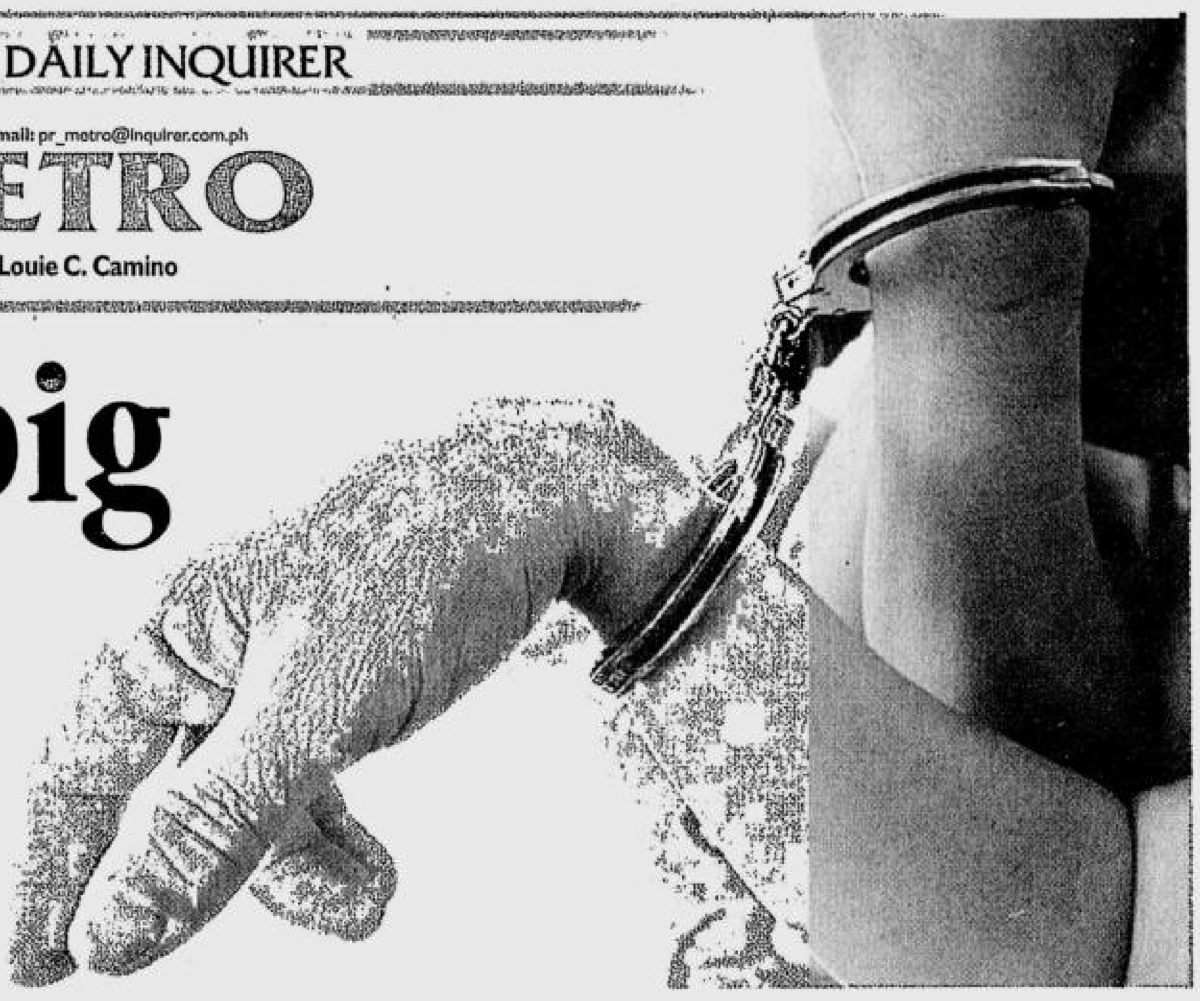
Editor Louie C. Camino

Police score big

By Jerome Aning, Christian Esguerra and Alcuin papa



CPD DETAINEE

HANDCUFFED (above) is main suspect in P2-M drug bust; mauled (above left) is a bus robber caught on Edsa; rounded up (left) are suspects in various crimes.
DENNIS SABANGAN

SMARTING from a presidential rebuke, the police have finally started to score against criminal elements with a series of big arrests.

Four women members of the dreaded Ativan Gang fell in Binondo, Manila, while a suspected robber was shot dead and his companion wounded in an encounter with cops in Pasay.

Police scored both triumphs on Tuesday.

In Quezon City, police yesterday reported having nabbed two suspected drug dealers with P2 million worth of shabu last week.

These were welcome developments after goons refused to be fazed immediately after President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday scolded police authorities for failure to curb criminality in the streets.

As we went to press, President Arroyo was reported to have paid a surprise visit yesterday afternoon at Police Station 2 in Tondo, Manila.

In Pasay, Dante Dolores, 29, died of a gunshot wound in the back following a brief shootout with members of the Special Weapons and Tactics near the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran.

His companion, 20-year-old Allan Francisco, was hit in the right thigh while security guard Francisco Basilides, 56, was grazed by a stray bullet on his buttocks.

In the Quezon City arrest, two suspected drug dealers with P2 million worth of shabu fell in a buy-bust last week.

Central Police District director Supt. Napoleon Castro identified the suspects as Rashid Mangtoma, 39; and Mike Steve Basman, 18, both residents of 4 Lectura St., Kimco Village, Sauyo, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Ativan Gang

Suspected Ativan members Agnes Cusipe, 22, Melanie Tubay, 42, Babylyn Reyes, 48, and Aurora Balais, 48, were apprehended at around 2:30 p.m. at the Divisoria Mall on M. de Santos St. in Binondo while about to prey on Czech David Heide.

Police said Heide, currently billeted in a Malate hotel, was about to place in his mouth a drug-laced candy offered by one of the suspects when the cops moved in.

Heide later recounted that the women befriended him while he was strolling at the Rizal Park.

He said they invited him to go to the Divisoria Mall.

The triumph over the Ativan Gang came after General Assignments Section head Chief Insp. Arturo Paglinawan deployed operatives at the park following reports that a group of women had been preying on tourists in the area by drugging them and divesting them of their valuables.

Before the arrest on Tuesday, a number of tourists had been victimized by the Ativan Gang in Intramuros and around the Tourist Belt.

Minutes before the shootout in Baclaran, Francisco had held up Marilou Macaraeg, 35, while she was waiting for a ride near the corner of F.B. Harrison and Moana Streets at around 8:30 p.m., police said.

Francisco fled with one Jeffrey Guevarra, 30, and Dolores who drove the getaway vehicle, a red '78 Mitsubishi Lancer.

But the victim managed to seek help from SWAT members who trailed the suspects until their Lancer hit two buses in Baclaran, police said.

Meanwhile, security guards shot and seriously wounded a suspected robber inside the Manila Electric Company Building complex in Pasig City yesterday morning.

Wounded was suspect Jackie Salinas, 41, of Villa Baltazar, Palatiw, Pasig City. His companion. Federico Perez, 23, was arrested.

Out in Quezon City where intensified surveillance had resulted into a series of apprehensions, police were hot on the trail of the suspected carnap gang head following the recovery from her house of eight stolen vehicles.

CPD operatives identified the suspect as Elena Lim of 33 Dona Juana Rodriguez Ave., New Manila, Quezon City. *With a report from Nelson Flores*

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Solons back Metro curfew

By Christine O. Avendano

LAWMAKERS whose districts are already observing curfews for the youth do not see anything wrong with the proposal to have the curfew implemented in the whole of Metro Manila.

Majority Leader Rep. Neptali Gonzales II of Mandaluyong said that a number of cities and municipalities in Metro Manila are already observing curfews like his own city.

Gonzales said this was in exercise of what he termed was "parens expatriae authority" or parental authority or the State acting as protector over minors.

"I find nothing wrong with the proposal, especially in uncertain times like this.. and as long as this is implemented to those below 18 years old," he said in a phone interview.

Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez said he believes parents and the elders would welcome such proposal.

Lopez said Manila too has been imposing curfews for quite some time.

But he noted that legalists might not like the idea as they would see it as a restriction on the freedom of movement.

"But in the exercise of the State's police power to protect and prevent crime, this can make laws such as the Bill of Rights not absolute,' 'Lopez added.

Also supporting the proposal was Muntinlupa Rep. Rufino Biazon whose city is also imposing curfews for minors.

"It would not prevent crime en toto but crimes involving youth would be reduced," Biazon said in a separate interview.

Under the proposal, both juvenile delinquents and victims of minor age would be kept off the streets as well, he said.

6 counts of rape filed today against Dennis Da Silva

By Michael Lim Ubac

DA SILVA

THE JUSTICE department found yesterday probable cause to indict ex-child star Dennis Da Silva for multiple counts of rape.

In case of conviction, Da Silva faces the prospect of being executed by lethal injection since his victim is the daughter of his live-in partner.

Under the heinous crime law, sexual assault of a stepdaughter by her stepfather is punishable by death.

Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno announced to reporters yesterday that Da Silva—mainstay of the defunct That's Entertainment and star of "Ninja Kids," among other 80s movies—is set to be charged with six counts of rape and violation of the law against child abuse (Republic Act 7610).

The charges are set to be filed today with the Parañaque City regional trial court.

Zuno noted that Da Silva, although not in law, was the stepfather of the girl.

"Under the prevailing circumstances, it is clear that respondent Da Silva exercised and abused his influence and moral ascendancy over complainant who was only 14 years old at the time of the commission of the offense such that she became an easy prey to his lustful desires," said the resolution.

The resolution was written by State Prosecutor Sebastian Caponong Jr. on Feb. 11, recommended by Senior State Prosecutor Archimedes Manabat, and approved by Zuno yesterday.

The prosecutors, however, cleared the victim's mother (Marilyn Paz), saying there was insufficient evidence to hold her criminally liable as an accessory.

The mother had initially blamed the rape incidents on her daughter.

"There is no showing that she profited or assisted Da Silva ... nor is there evidence to show that she concealed the commission of the crime," said the prosecutors.

On the contrary, the mother had shown "displeasure and contempt against complainant and respondent Da Silva when she discovered the secret relationship."

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GSIS chief denies sickness story

GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System president and general manager Winston Garcia yesterday denied earlier news reports that he is due to be replaced because he has kidney trouble that requires daily dialysis treatment.

Garcia described the news item as "the lowest of the lowest below-the-belt blow," that he had so far received from his detractors in his long years in public service. He said this latest attempt to discredit him can only be the product of a twisted mind.

The GSIS chief had just returned from a series of meetings in Cebu and Iloilo where he presided over the agency's management focus sessions.

He said the continued black propaganda campaign against him only gives credence to suspicions that a powerful group is working double time to remove him from his position.

Garcia has been the target of several disinformation attempts shortly after he assumed his position as GSIS head.

He appealed to media to thoroughly check their sources before publishing stories that could cause irreparable consequences, since unfounded and malicious stories can ruin the reputations and standings of persons and institutions.

On the allegation that someone has already been tapped to take over his post, Garcia stressed that the position of GSIS president and general manager is not vacant.

"My services have not been terminated by President Arroyo and neither have I relinquished my position. So what post is there to take over?"

Woman burns to her death inside car in road accident

By Christian V. Esguerra

A WOMAN burned to death inside her car after it rammed into a 10-wheeler along the South Luzon Tollways in Biñan on Tuesday night.

Mary Joyce Caunan, a resident of Calatagan in Batangas, was trapped inside her Toyota Altis when she failed to undo her seatbelt after her vehicle caught fire at 11:35 on Tuesday, according to highway authorities.

Caunan was on her way to Manila when she lost control of her car which then hit the back of a truck loaded with lumber near Southville Village, said a report by Philippine National Construction Corp. operator Manny Frades.

Traffic investigators are looking into the possibility that Caunan could have been "snake driving" because the truck was then moving at a moderate speed along the outer lane which is intended for slow-moving vehicles.

When Caunan hit the truck, the impact caused the car to swerve to the left and plow into the middle island.

Investigation showed that another motorist told the truck's driver that a car had hit him from behind. The driver immediately pulled over and checked on Caunan, but he was not able to get near the car which was already burning.

200 families lose homes in Las Piñas slum fire

By Christian V. Esguerra

ABOUT 200 families lost their homes in a huge fire in a slum in Las Piñas last Tuesday night.

No one was reported killed in the five-hour fire that started inside a shanty at Bernabe Compound, Pulang Lupa.

Residents saw thick smoke billowing out of the shanty of Norma Molito shortly after suppertime, said FO3 Philip Abong.

A lighted candle that was left unattended supposedly triggered the fire.

Abong said the fire spread to other shanties which were made of wood and other flammable materials.

The fire reached the general alarm, the highest emergency alert level, before at least 30 fire trucks from all over Metro Manila extinguished the flames at 12:21 a.m. the following day.

Damage to property was estimated at P5 million.

PCG to host anti-piracy exercises

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard will host a week's training in marine pollution response capability and anti-piracy operations in an effort to enhance the skills of its personnel and respond to maritime emergencies.

Coast Guard Commandant Vice Admiral Reuben S. Lista said a five-day marine pollution exercise among Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines will be held from March 1-5 in Subic Bay, Zambales involving at least 600 Coast Guard personnel and various environmentalist groups.

The third experts meeting among regional anti-piracy experts will be held in Manila on March 6-7 to be culminated by an anti-piracy demonstration between Philippine Coast Guard and its Japanese counterpart in Manila Bay.

The MARPOLEX which started in 1988, is a bilateral agreement between Indonesia and the Philippines. In 1995, the Japanese Maritime Security Agency joined the exercise held in Manila as an observer but later decided to actively participate.

US accreditation of school bolsters employment chances of graduates

MAPUA Institute of Technology.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

STUDENTS who will graduate with a degree from Mapua Institute of Technology might have a better chance of finding employment in the United States when the institute is granted certification by the US Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology.

Mapua President Reynaldo Vea said the certification would make Mapua programs equivalent to university programs implemented in the US.

Vea added that Mapua would complement the certification with "a career placement process that maximizes the student's chances of landing a good job after graduation."

Mapua has also established linkages with other schools so that its graduates would have access to cutting-edge technology and best-of-breed processes.

Among its partnerships is an exchange program with California Polytechnic University (CalPoly) in San Luis Obispo, the leading technological school in the California State University system.

Mapua also has a knowledge-sharing program with the University of South Carolina (USC) since February of 2000.

Vea said the program aims to support the environmental engineering programs of Mapua and USC.

In the region, Mapua has an exchange program with the Waseda University of Japan that will initially be focused on IT.

The institute has incorporated different IT subjects in all of its courses.

"The fact that information technology has become vital in in the workplace is the key reason why we have placed emphasis on the integration of information technology in all our courses," said Vea.

"Right now, we probably have the most sophisticated engineering equipment among the universities around," he said.

Last Jan. 25, Mapua celebrated its 78th anniversary.

With more than seven decades of history to look back on, Mapua is set to face the challenges of the future, Vea said.

"Competitiveness is a key ingredient—a value-added advantage that each Mapua student must acquire to succeed," he said. "Our responsibility is to equip graduates with the knowledge and skills that meet industry's requirements while allowing them to develop values that will benefit the society as a whole.

"We saw the writing on the wall," Vea added. "In a world that was undergoing rapid globalization, we had to innovate or succumb to a slow, painful decline. "We want our country to stand side-by-side with our neighbors in terms of our standard of education."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, February 27, 2003
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 5:1-8
Gospel: Mk 9:41-50

Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ and bear his name, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward.

"If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck.

"If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than with two hands to go to hell, to the fire that never goes out. And if your foot makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than with both feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than, keeping both eyes, to be thrown into hell where the worms that eat them never die, and the fire never goes out. The fire itself will preserve them.

"Salt is a good thing; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

Commentary

What Jesus is saying is that we just have to set our priorities straight. We must have a sense of the value of salvation if we are to avoid putting it in jeopardy, both in our and others' lives. We do not live in the midst of persecutions. Yet our faith, our salvation, is put in danger by the worldly values we are constantly exposed to. Are we seasoned enough with discipline, with the Word of God to remain loyal disciples in our world?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Extrinsic fraud—Extrinsic fraud refers to any fraudulent act of the prevailing party in the litigation which is committed outside of the trial of the case, whereby the unsuccessful party has been prevented from exhibiting fully his case, by fraud or deception practiced on him by his opponent. Fraud is regarded as extrinsic where it prevents a party from having a trial or from presenting his entire case to the court, or where it operates upon matters pertaining not to the judgment itself but to the manner in which it is procured. The overriding consideration when extrinsic fraud is alleged is that the fraudulent scheme of the prevailing litigant prevented a party from having his day in court. None of these conditions obtain in the case at bar. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Teodoro, v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 140799. Sept. 10, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Two immature bankers

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

IGLESIA ni Cristo (INC) Executive Minister Erano Manalo has expressed disappointment that last Sunday's prayer rally for world peace sponsored by El Shaddai was turned into a "circus."

And since when has an El Shaddai prayer rally not been a circus? Since when has an El Shaddai prayer rally really been a prayer rally?

Pinagloloko lang ni Mike Velarde ang kanyang mga alipores. Nagpapaloko naman sila!

* * *

INC's Ka Erdie should not blame President Macapagal-Arroyo for using the event to justify the impending United States invasion of Iraq.

What else could have been expected of the President but to justify her government's stand in the Iraq stand-off?

I'm sure the President did not come to the prayer rally uninvited. Knowing Velarde, a grandstand player (no pun intended), he invited the President and other politicians to lend prestige to the occasion.

* * *

Ka Erdie should not blame other religious leaders for politicking.

He himself is politicking whenever he decrees to INC followers to vote for politicians of his choice.

What's good about Ka Erdie, though, is that he never asks for money from politicians that he supports. His support stems from a sincere desire of the INC to help in nation-building.

It's no longer his fault if politicians that the INC supported during the election turned out to be corrupt and inefficient. Even if he's a religious man he cannot see into the future.

* * *

Another thing about Ka Erdie's INC is that, unlike El Shaddai, this religion is not engaged in hocus-pocus and abracadabra.

Manalo doesn't make his followers stand under the rain with their umbrellas upside down. He doesn't make them wave handkerchiefs to heaven.

The Guy Up There must be laughing at the bunch of fanatics during El Shaddai prayer rallies.

* * *

Bankers are educated people who are level-headed and coolheaded. Since they hold other people's money, they're expected to be mature individuals.

But levelheaded, coolheaded and mature these two bankers are not: Vicente Panlilio, director of the Philippine National Bank and one of the top executives of the Far East Bank and Trust Co. (FEBTC) before it was bought out by Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI); and Octavio V. Espiritu, former president of the FEBTC and president of the Ateneo Alumni Association.

Espiritu punched Panlilio in the left eye at the former's vacation home at Punta Fuego, Nasugbu, Batangas, a few days before Christmas 2002.

* * *

The blow was so severe Panlilio was advised by his doctors to have surgery to correct dislocations in his left eye and nose.

Panlilio has sued Espiritu in court, demanding P140,000 for the costs of medical consultations, medical services, surgery, hospital confinement and post-operative consultations; P1 million for the costs of future surgery to prevent facial deformity; P5 million in moral damages; P5 million in exemplary damages; and P500,000 in attorney's fees. Total: P11,720,000 ! Susmaryosep!

* * *

What really happened?

Panlilio said he was driving a golf cart around his vacation house in Punta Fuego, Nasugbu, when he decided to visit Espiritu. Espiritu's vacation home is a few meters away from the Panlilios'.

Espiritu's wife, Marilen, invited him in and showed him to the dining table.

Espiritu came out and offered Panlilio some wine which the latter accepted.

* * *

When Espiritu returned to the dining table, Panlilio reportedly confronted him.

"I was informed that you are mad at me for badmouthing you," Panlilio reportedly told Espiritu.

Espiritu reportedly replied: "Are you threatening me?" Thus saying, Espiritu reportedly stood up and punched Panlilio on the left eye.

* * *

When Panlilio tried to hit back, but Espiritu stepped back.

At this juncture, Espiritu's son held his father back. Ms Espiritu came into the room.

"Why this?" Panlilio asked Espiritu's wife.

"Because you've been badmouthing my husband, according to Josie Balatbat," replied Ms Espiritu.

Then Espiritu reportedly shouted to Panlilio: "If you think you are welcome in this house, you are not."

* * *

It would not have been surprising if the one-way fight started when both parties were drunk.

But they were sober and in control of their faculties.

Nakakahiya kayo!

'He thought we were meddling'

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE WOMAN who accused the owner of a telecoms firm of threatening to kill her yesterday said that she and another friend only accompanied his wife in a Makati cafe last Monday.

Rosabella Valencia-Ferro, 60, daughter of the late journalist Teodoro Valencia, said that Raymond Moreno, owner of Liberty Telecoms, probably thought that she and Maribel Pelayo were meddling with his marriage when he saw them with his wife Marrot inside Cafe Caruso on Nicanor Garcia Street in Makati last Monday.

"Without any provocation, he came barging into the coffee shop and started cursing and shouting at me like a crazy man," Ferro yesterday told the INQUIRER.

She earlier reported to police that Moreno had threatened to kill her.

Moreno's lawyer Charlene Hernandez on Tuesday said that her client had no reason to threaten to kill Ferro. She said Moreno had told her that he only shouted at Ferro after she provoked him. Police on Tuesday said that Ferro did reveal why she and Moreno were fighting.

Hernandez also said on Tuesday that Moreno did not want to disclose the reason behind his quarrel with Ferro.

But Pelayo yesterday told the INQUIRER that while they were in the coffee shop, she and Ferro were urging Moreno's wife Marrot to save her marriage even if she suspected her husband of having another woman.

"We were telling her to be more patient, to hang on, that God would take care of them," Pelayo said.

Oil firms bent on seeking amendment of Pandacan depot measure

By Ronnel Domingo and Jerome Aning

THE BIG Three oil firms are planning to seek an amendment of a November 2001 Manila ordinance that reclassified land use of the Pandacan area in an effort to stop the total shutdown of their product terminals.

Roberto Kanapi, general manager for external affairs of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum, said in an interview that the oil firms would invoke the "non-conformity use" of the properties.

Manila Ordinance No. 8027 rezoned that part of Pandacan where the oil facility is located from an industrial to a commercial/residential area.

"Non-conformity use allows for the continued operation of (an establishment) that was already in an area before it was rezoned," Kanapi explained.

He said the doctrine had been in use since the early 1980s during the days of the Metro Manila Commission—predecessor of the Metro Manila Development Authority.

"The Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board has adopted this and we believe this provides a legal ground for our stay in Pandacan," Kanapi said.

The oil executive said a petition on the matter would be filed with City Hall by the first week of March.

On Monday, 27 barangay chiefs representing the communities surrounding the Pandacan depot visited the facilities and conducted a dialogue with officials of Petron, Pilipinas Shell and Caltex Philippines.

Rito E. Ilao, chair of Barangay 847, said he believed he spoke for the majority in saying that they trusted the capability of government agencies and the oil companies in containing any possible catastrophe.

"What we need is to cooperate in keeping our safety and security," Ilao told representatives of the oil firms. "We call the shots in mobilizing the communities, but we need your assistance in resources and training for our fire-brigades."

Other barangay leaders backed the retention of the oil depot in their district, saying that the residents' livelihood would be affected if the facility were to be phased out.

But Felix Majabague, chair of Barangay 835, believes that the facility is a threat, and would only attract terrorist attacks.

Councilor Edward Tan, a former fireman, scoffed at the oil firms' claim that the depot is safe.

He said he was particularly concerned about the underground pipelines connecting the depot with the refineries in Batangas.

City Hall had given the Big Three only until the end of April to operate in view of public consultations regarding the ordinance.

Loren asks court to junk suit banning her from TV

By Jerome Aning

SENATOR Loren Legarda has asked a Manila regional trial court judge to dismiss a lawsuit questioning her television appearances.

Citing the principle of separation of powers, Legarda said the Senate, not the court, has "the sole and exclusive prerogative and jurisdiction" to determine whether her hosting of TV shows is an exercise of her profession in media and ought to banned by law.

The Manila-based Social Justice Society, a party-list group made up of lawyers, said public officials are barred from exercising their profession under Republic Act No. 6713, or the code of conduct and ethical standards for public officials and employees.

Section 7 of R.A. 6713 declares unlawful for any public official and employee to "engage in private practice of their profession unless authorized by the Constitution or law, provided that such practice will not conflict or tend to conflict with official functions."

Aside from Legarda, Sen. Noli de Castro was also named respondent in the case. The two senators host TV programs broadcast over ABS-CBN.

De Castro also asked the court to junk the case, arguing that the hosting of TV shows is neither unethical nor illegal.

The case is being tried by Judge Placido Marquez of the Manila RTC Branch 40.

In her two-page motion to dismiss dated Feb. 19, Legarda said any court ruling would be an affront to the sole and exclusive prerogative of the Senate to impose the penalty of suspension or removal of its members from the exercise of their functions as senators.

She noted that Section 11 of the same RA imposes penalties for violations of any of the act's provisions, among which is suspension or removal from office.

SJS contends that De Castro and Legarda were elected into office by reason of their celebrity status, which they gained by hosting TV shows.

The lawyers' group is pursuing a similar case against government executives who are appearing in movies and TV shows.

ON PATROL
Western Police District Chief Pedro Bulaong gives last-minute instructions to his men before they go on patrol in Manila's tourist belt. Bulaong hopes to bring down the crime rate in the heart of the city, and boost the tourism trade in the capital.
ERIK ARAZAS

No hard feelings, Manila barangay chief tells Atienza

By Jerome Aning

AFTER becoming the "legitimate" president of Manila's barangay league, Councilor Natalio Beltran III is now extending the olive branch to Mayor Lito Atienza and the latter's allies in the City Council.

"I've no hard feelings against (Atienza)," Beltran told the INQUIRER in an interview. "I'm willing to work with him and support his development projects."

But he recalled that he never hesitated to contradict Atienza, his nuptial godfather, when the latter had proposed the changing of the election rules for the league presidency.

On Monday, the Manila regional trial court invalidated an ordinance that modified the election rules of league president.

The city ordinance provided that the league president be chosen by chapter presidents from each of the city's six districts. But under the Local Government Code, the president must be elected at large by all barangay chairs.

Backed by Atienza, a new league president, Carlos Castañeda, was chosen under the new rules and allowed to sit in the Council in September 2002.

Beltran, then the incumbent league chief, was reelected the following month in a separate convention of barangay chairs.

The national barangay league also recognized Beltran and even elected him national treasurer and senior director.

For five months, the majority and minority factions in the Council clashed over the legitimacy of the ordinance.

Early this year, the aldermen reached a compromise by allowing both Castañeda and Beltran to sit in the council.

Beltran said he no longer needs formal recognition as the legal league president when the Council holds its session today.

With the ordinance invalidated, he explained, Castañeda would no longer have any right to sit as league president.

Beltran has submitted a copy of the court decision to the council's presiding officer, Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna, and its secretariat.

He also said that he expects to regain his office at City Hall's fifth floor, his salary and his chairmanship of the barangay affairs committee.

Asked what he learned in the course of the lawsuit, Beltran said: "I've learned to read and understand the law."

Beltran, a businessman, is chair of Barangay 496 in Sampaloc. His father and namesake, a former Romblon congressman, was a co-author of the Local Government Code.

As league chief, the 32-year-old Beltran is expected to wield political influence in next year's national and local elections.

MMDA roadside judges settle over 500 cases

By Leila Salaverria

ROADSIDE judges of the Metro Manila Development Authority have resolved over 500 traffic arguments that could have led to full-blown shouting matches, fistfights or, worse, deaths.

Since the project was implemented in November last year, traffic arbitrators have helped to keep traffic flowing smoothly and prevented arguments from getting out of hand, said Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel De Dios.

"If a motorist and a traffic enforcer were arguing on the road, they would block other vehicles," he explained. "But with the arbitrator, the argument could be resolved at once."

The arbitrators have also helped prevent hot-tempered motorists from driving because they make sure that they put an end to the argument before both parties go their way.

Under the MMDA project, motorists who do not agree with a traffic enforcer over a citation for a traffic violation could call for a traffic arbitrator who would act as an impartial third party by hearing both sides of the argument, and then making his own decision.

If any of the parties still disagree with the arbitrator's decision, then they could file a complaint with the MMDA.

The roadside judge could be requested through the MMDA's 136 hotline.

Beginning this month, the MMDA would also be adding more arbitrators following their acquisition of new motorcycles.

Vergel de Dios also said that since the MMDA deployed its traffic arbitrators, there have been less motorists going to the MMDA to file complaints, thus saving time, energy and resources.

December had the most number of arguments—235—that the traffic arbitrators had to resolve. Of these, 114 of the original decisions of a traffic enforcer were upheld, 17 were modified and 104 were canceled.

Vergel de Dios attributed the high number of arguments to the heavier-than-usual traffic flow that hits the metropolis in December.

In November, the traffic arbitrators decided on 85 arguments. Forty-five of the original decisions were affirmed, 15 were modified and 25 were cancelled.

Last month, 109 called for arbitration. Of these, 63 decisions were affirmed, 7 modified and 39 cancelled.

So far this month, 59 arguments have been resolved: 41 of these were affirmed, 7 modified and 11 cancelled.

In forgiveness, an elderly couple finds bliss

By Andrea Trinidad-Echavez
Contributor

ROSA Borromeo and her husband, Benjamin Pulido, have survived a tortuous marriage.

They lived out a riches-to-rags life that can only be compared to a telenovela.

For 59 years, they loved and hated each other with equal passion.

Rosa, who comes from a rich Cebu clan was barely 15 when Benjamin saw her outside her family's home just across the San Juan Municipal Hall. Benjamin was only 19 at the time, but he swears he was smitten by Rosa's beauty even though she was known as a snob in their neighborhood.

But that did not stop Ben from courting Rosa, charming his way into her heart.

"I was afraid of men," Nanay Rosa, now 75, shared. "Coming from a broken family, I feared that I would end up like my mom, who separated from my father when my brothers and I were very young."

But Ben's persistence slowly melted her heart. In 1944, she agreed to marry him. Soon, the couple bore eight children, one after the other.

Though both come from affluent families, the couple strove on their own to give their children a comfortable life.

Even though they did not have college degrees, Ben and Rosa managed to put up a "build and sell" business.

For 55 years, Ben and Rosa were a picture-perfect couple who stuck it out with each other even after they lost almost everything that they worked for over the years.

But in 1999, all that came apart.

"I kept it all inside me," Nanay Rosa said. "But I could no longer keep mum about his philandering."

Ironically, the incident which broke up their five-decade marriage happened in a church fellowship.

The couple were attending a church fellowship when Nanay Rosa saw her husband "flirting" with another church member.

"I had kept silent for over five decades for the sake of our children," she said. "But at that time, I felt I could not take it anymore."

Because of the deep wounds that she had been nursing over the years, Nanay Rosa began to hurt her husband physically, prompting their children to separate them for a while.

The incident made her children upset.

"He was a very good father to our children," Nanay Rosa said. "Naturally, they wouldn't believe he had affairs with other women so maybe, they did not understand why I reacted that way."

The elderly couple went their separate ways for the first time in 55 years, and they stayed apart for seven months.

A few months later, Tatay Ben returned to their rented home and told Nanay Rosa that he was a changed man.

ROSA and Benjamin Pulido.

But the pain that Nanay Rosa felt might have been too deep for soon, they began to quarrel again, and often.

One day, things took a turn for the worse when Nanay Rosa attempted to take her own life.

She tried to have herself run over by a car in the busy section of Maginhawa Street in Teachers' Village.

Some staff members of World Vision, an international non-government organization, saw her.

They ran to rescue her and literally carried her off to their office which was just across the street.

"God must have had a reason for stopping me each time I think of something bad," Nanay Rosa said. "I realized that there are still people who care for me."

Grateful to the staff who rescued her, Nanay Rosa volunteered her services to World Vision for free. Later, Tatay Ben joined her in the organization, doing administrative work.

World Vision turned out to be a blessing to the couple. The staff became instrumental in helping the couple to gradually learn to forgive each other. Nanay Rosa also found at World Vision the love and attention that she had been longing for in her life.

But she said she feels sad every time she remembers her children, especially during her birthday and on Christmas when they don't get to see them.

"(Rosa) loves them dearly even though the staff at World Vision makes us feel like we're really their family," says Tatay Ben.

Nanay Rosa feels her happiness will only be complete once her children come to forgive her.

Burglars hit a businessman's home in Quezon City

By Alcuin Papa

AN ELDERLY businessman was robbed of P280,000 in cash and jewelry when eight burglars broke into his house in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

Dominador Menes, 75, of Gen. Martinez Street, Heroes Hill, Barangay Sta. Cruz, Quezon City, went to the Central Police District's Criminal Investigation Unit to file a complaint.

According to SPO4 Marcelino Castillo, burglars broke into Menes' residence at around 5:30 a.m. yesterday.

Menes, his wife and their helpers were asleep when the eight suspects entered the house, woke them up and hogtied them at gunpoint.

The victims said the suspects were armed with bladed weapons and .45-caliber pistols.

After tying up the victims, the suspects proceeded to rob the house. Menes said he lost pieces of jewelry worth about P100,000, a digital camera worth P50,000, a Nokia cellular phone worth P10,000 a bank check worth P50,000, and P50,000 in cash.

The victims managed to free themselves after a few hours and immediately reported the matter to police.

Investigators are now on the trail of the suspects.

H-World's Royette rapped anew

By Agnes Donato

A BROTHER of actor Robin Padilla was charged with estafa yesterday after he and his companions allegedly refused to pay for the food and drinks they consumed last Friday at Tikyo's Night Spot in Fairview, Quezon City.

Royette Padilla, 40, who had made news in 1996 when he claimed to be a "brigadier general" of the so-called H-World United Nations Military Philippine Government International Police Commission (or H-World), was accused of running a bill worth P11,687 and refusing to pay for it.

Juliet Socorro, 42, owner of the bar, also named Padilla's companions—Arnel Luveria and Lito Mercado—as respondents in the estafa case she filed before the QC Prosecutor's Office.

Luveria is currently in police custody while Padilla and Mercado have yet to be arrested.

In May 1996, separate estafa charges were also filed against Padilla after he reportedly failed to pay the bills he incurred during his stay at the Manila Hotel and at Club John Hay in Baguio City.

He had claimed that as brigadier general of H-World, he was entitled to free hotel accommodations anywhere in the world.

Mangaldan residents assembly

ALL Mangaldan, Pangasinan residents now living in Metro Manila and suburbs are enjoined to attend a general assembly and meeting this evening at 6 p.m., at the Max Restaurant on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

On the agenda is the induction program for the new officers of the Mangaldan Residents Association, to be held during the Mangaldan town fiesta on March 7 and 8.

For particulars, call Mike Evangelista at 363-8092, 360-9759, and Billy de Guzman at 931-6363.

Pelikula at Lipunan at SM

A HEARTWARMING tribute to Dolphy, Philippine cinema's King of Comedy...the book launch of award-winning filmmaker Nick de Ocampo's "Cine: Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines"...the screening of the festival's opening film 'El Crimen del Padre Amaro' (The Crime of Father Amaro) by Cannes Award winning director Carlos Carrera.

These were some of the highlights of the recent launching of the 10th Pelikula at Lipunan Film Festival at the SM Megamall Cinema. The weeklong festival showcased critically acclaimed foreign and local films at the SM Megamall Cinema 6.

A joint project of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Mowelfund Film Institute, the film festival's ribbon cutting ceremony had Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos and Dolphy as the guests of honor. They were joined by movie queen Susan Roces and NCCA executive director Fina Yonzon.

Pelikula at Lipunan honored Dolphy, Philippine cinema's King of Comedy, whose career has spanned 59 years of unforgettable laughter on screen. His family, including Zsa Zsa Padilla and children Jeffrey, Ronnie and Vandolph joined in the celebration, as did his friends from the industry. These included Susan Roces, Mowelfund executive director Boots Anson-Roa, Mowelfund chair lawyer Espiridion Laxa, director Eddie Romero, German Moreno and Ricky Davao

During the tribute, Dolphy was presented with a portrait by Louie Corderoby NCCA chair and Tourism Undersecretary Evelyn Pantig, Boots Anson-Roa, Nick de Ocampo, and German Moreno. A special screening of his 1969 film "Facifica Falayfay" directed by Chaning Carlos was also shown on the opening night.

Memorabilia from Dolphy's career, including his famous 'puruntong' pants worn in the John and Marsha series, and a photo gallery of the memorable characters he played on film and television were also displayed at the SM Megamall Cinema lobby.

Award-winning filmmaker Nick de Ocampo also launched his book, "Cine: Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines" during Pelikula at Lipunan's opening night.

The 426 page book, which is published by the NCCA with support from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in Spain, it traces Spanish influences in the Filipino film industry.

Among those who attended the book launching were Filipino literary and cultural luminaries like Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera; cultural historian and film critic Dr. Nicanor Tiongson; Anvil Publishing's Karina Bolasco; DFA Ambassador Virgilio Reyes Jr.; and filmmakers Miriello Fornego, Arturo Vidal, Minnie Crouse, as well as Alliance Francaise director Philippe Normand.

Capping the Festival's Opening Night was the screening of Mexican director Carlos Carrera's 'El Crimen del Padre Amaro' (The Crime of Father Amaro). Considered Mexico's biggest box office hit of all time, El Crimen garnered critical acclaim all over the world.

Members of the diplomatic corps came out in full force for the screening. These included Mexican Ambassador Enrique Hubbard, the Mexican Embassy's deputy chief of mission Carlos Torres, US Embassy economic counsellor Dan Martinez, Carlos Garcia of the Embassy of Venezuela, and DFA acting director for Mexico and Central America Jerome Castro.

Pelikula at Lipunan showcased critically acclaimed international films during its week long run at the SM Cinema. These included current Oscar front liner and Golden Globe Best Picture The Hours with Nicole Kidman and Meryl Streep; an adaptation of Shakespear's Titus Andronicus starring Sir Anthony Hopkins; and maverick director P.T. Anderson's Cannes Festival winning film, Punch Drunk Love.

Asian films also stood out in the filmfest; Koji Imaizumi's Small Home, a co-production between Japan and the Philippines; Japan's Hush and All About Lily Chou Chou,and Thailand's Monrak Transistor.

The festival also saluted three Philippine indie classics: Nick de Ocampo's Oliver; Raymond Red's Ang Magpakailanman; and Roxlee's The Great Smoke, all made in 1983.

After its run at the SM Megamall Cinema, the 10th Pelikula at Lipunan unreels at SM City Iloilo on Feb. 21 and 22, and in Baguio on Feb. 28 and March 1.

FROM left: Mowelfund chair lawyer Espiridion Laxa, Oscar Moreno, director Eddie and Carolina Romero.

FESTIVAL director Nick de Ocampo welcomes Alliance Francaise's Philippe Normand and documentary filmmaker Mireille Fornengo to the Pelikula at Lipunan Film Fest at the SM Megamall Cinema.

FROM left: US Embassy economic counsellor Dan Martinez and wife Carolina with the Embassy of Venezuela's Carlos Garcia and Claudia Scigliano.

SHARING the honors during Pelikula at Lipunan's ribbon-cutting ceremony were Dolphy,and Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos. They were joined by National Commission for Culture and the Arts executive director Maria Fina Yonzon and Susan Roces.

SM Cinema's Lyka Ugarte, Mowelfund executive director Boots Anson-Roa, Ronnie Quizon, festival director Nick de Ocampo and festival co-director Paolo Villaluna.

DOLPHY at the Pelikula at Lipunan Film Fest.

MARICHU Perez-Maceda.

CULTURAL historian and film critic Dr. Nicanor Tiongson.

AMBASSADOR of Mexico Enrique Hubbard.

SUSAN Roces and German Moreno

'Palaguin ang sariling galing'

LAST Feb 22., the GP Kapihan was held at the Chowking Pioneer Center near Shaw Boulevard in Pasig, which focused on how to revitalize our countryside economy from within through some 'star' products grown in the Philippines. The Philippine mango is the best tasting mango in the world. The Philippines grows the 'barako' coffee beans that many foreigners like, especially in the Middle East countries. Philippine-grown cacao produces world-class chocolate products. Philippine nata de coco has been able to cure cancer. Philippine coconuts have much benefit to offer the world market.

Speakers shared their insights and proposals about creating solutions that will spur productivity, propagate livelihood and create jobs in our country today. Guest speakers include Leo Hernandez, cacao grower from Davao City and Jun Mendoza of Nepa who shared about community-centered economic development that will lead to self-reliant local economies.

Come to the Galing Pilipino Kapihan that is held every 4th Saturday of the month. Find out how some Galing Pilipinos are growing or preserving their business potential in these tough times. Attendance in the GP Kapihan is free. Brunch is provided by GP Kapihan host, Chowking.

Due to a strong clamor for GPM to offer the Natural Farming System (NFS) seminar, Andry Lim will conduct a one-day teaching workshop on March 1, Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Chowking Pioneer also. Seminar fee is P1,000 only with a 50 percent discount for Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) members. Find out about this low-cost chemical-free agribusiness method. NFS practitioners have experienced growing rice at a cost of only P2,000 per hectare with a 70 percent conversion rate. Previous seminar attendees have attested that hog raising can be odor-free, low-cost and with an ROI of more than 50 percent, using the NFS method.

For more information regarding any of the aforementioned activities, please call the GPM office at 843-7206 or telefax 843-7207, or text 0917-8354829. Look for Mike Pangilinan or Rhona de Leon.

BEYBLADE CHALLENGE WINNERS

The Beyblade High Speed Challenge kicked off its 2003 season with the successful conclusion of its first major tournament in the Year of the Ram held recently at Megatrade Hall 1, SM Megamall Mandaluyong City. Winners in the senior level of the singles division are shown receiving their prizes from Ban Kee Trading Inc., treasurer Nancy Gotamco (extreme left) and marketing and advertising/promo manager Marvie Rances-Samala (extreme right). The winners are (from left): Jan Remar Sihiyon (1st), Joey Velasco (2nd) and Kenneth Joydy Medoza (3rd). Not shown in photo is 4th placer Christopher James Garcia. Behind is Beyblade mascot Tyson.

Bits Clips

Hypertension forum

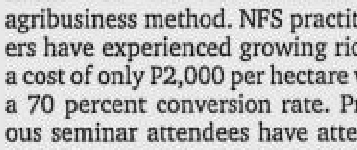
MORE than 500 practicing physicians from Metro Manila and Luzon will gather on Feb. 28, 6 p.m. at the Edsa Shangri-La in Mandaluyong City to attend a forum on the management of hypertension titled "Taking Life to Heart". The result of the landmark clinical trial European Lacidipine Study on Atherosclerosis (Elsa) will be presented by professor Alberto Zanchetti, head of the hypertension section at the University of Milan and is considered an international authority on hypertension. Atherosclerosis is the progressive narrowing of blood vessels leading to strokes and heart attacks. Dr. Rody Sy, current president of the Asian Pacific Society on Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases, will also discuss the role of combination therapy in meeting aggressive blood pressure targets.

Achievement award

GRADUATING high school and college students running for honors or not can vie for the first President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Achievement Award, the highest student achievement award in the country for public and private schools. Categories include: 1) academic achievement award for those running for honors, 2) leadership award for those who have shown outstanding leadership performances and 3) achievement award in science and technology. Nomination forms are available in DepEd National and ARMM, CHED National and DOST and the NDCP. Feb. 28 is the deadline for the submission of individual institution's letter of notice/assurance of having nominees in any or all of the categories and date of graduation. March 31 will be the last day of submission by the school to the National Awards/Steering Committee the final list of names of awardees with the duly certified/authenticated documents and/or results of the selection.

Talking Jazz with Tots Tolentino at The Podium

RENOWNED saxophonist Tots Tolentino will bring his passionate and energetic jazz rhythms to The Podium, the exciting upscale mall at the Ortigas Center on Friday, Feb. 28 at 8 p.m.



Inspired by the great Charlie Parker, Tots decided at 16 that the saxophone was to be his instrument of choice. Having studied the flute under the tutelage of Eric Barcelo at the UP Conservatory of Music, he continued his studies on soprano, alto and tenor saxophones under Joseph Voila at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Berklee with a Professional Music degree.

Since then, he has embarked on a career that has launched three solo albums: Tots Tolentino (Vicor), Inah (Vicor), and Color Real (Dyna), not to mention countless credits as session musician for almost every Filipino major artist on the Filipino entertainment scene.

His sound, described by critics as "passionate and energetic", as well as "articulate and authoritative", was strong enough to catch the ear of Asia's premiere jazz musician, Terumasa Hino, who invited Tots to join the Asian Jazz All-stars. With the group touring Asia and the US, Tots hopes to be a major force in connecting the Philippine jazz scene to the already prestigious Asian jazz circuit.

Catch Tots Tolentino at The Podium's Activity Center on Feb. 28 at 8 p.m.

Camdessus speaks

IN CELEBRATION of the Asian Institute of Management's 35th year, the AIM-Gov. Jose B. Fernandez Jr. Center (AIM-JBF Center) will hold its 3rd JBF Center Memorial Lecture on April 4, 12 noon to 3 p.m. at the 3rd floor, SGV Conference Hall, AIM Conference Center Manila (ACCM) Building, Benavidez corner Trasierra Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City. This year's theme is "Keeping the Faith in the Financial Systems". Former International Monetary Fund managing director Michel Camdessus will be the event's keynote speaker. He will speak on the topic "Toward a Monetary and Financial Architecture for the 21st Century." Camdessus will be introduced by AIM president Roberto F. de Ocampo. For reservation, call the AIM-JBF Center at 750-1010 locals 2100 and 2101. Deadline for early bird registration is on Feb. 28.

Operation Bigay Lunas

ON MARCH 1, Mercury Drug will celebrate its 58th anniversary by conducting "Operation Bigay Lunas" (OBL) in selected cities and municipalities nationwide. The OBL is an annual, all-day free consultation and medicine-giving for indigent patients. This is Mercury Drug's way of thanking its customers who continually support its commitment of giving its customers the best in health care. The undertaking will be made possible through the cooperation of its business partners, provincial governors, city and municipal mayors. The "Operation Bigay Lunas" is a part of Mercury Drug's commitment to improve the quality of people's health in the community.

ProductFILES

Globe, Citibank offers free Nokia 3530

GLOBE Handyphone the country's premier telecommunications company and Citibank, the world's largest credit card provider, have teamed up for a great value promotion that offers a free Nokia 3530 for approved Citibank Credit Card and G-plan application.

All Citibank Credit Card principal applications submitted and approved within the promo period of Jan. 15 to Feb. 28 qualify for this unique and exciting promo. To get their new Nokia 3530 unit, new Citibank credit cardholders just need to go to any Globe Telecom Business Center or Hub and apply for a Globe G-plan.

New subscribers may get the Nokia 3530 for free with the G-mix plan, which gives subscribers a total of 100 minutes free talk time and 350 free text messages for only P800 a month. They may also opt for higher plans, while those who will avail of Globe's Family Values package may get the Nokia 3530 for free on any G-plan.

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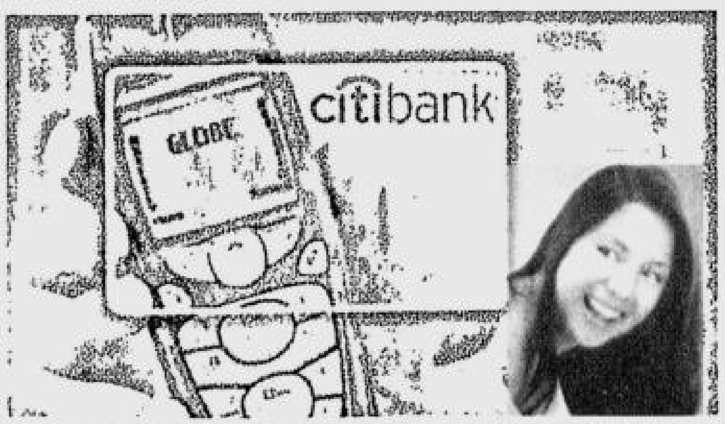

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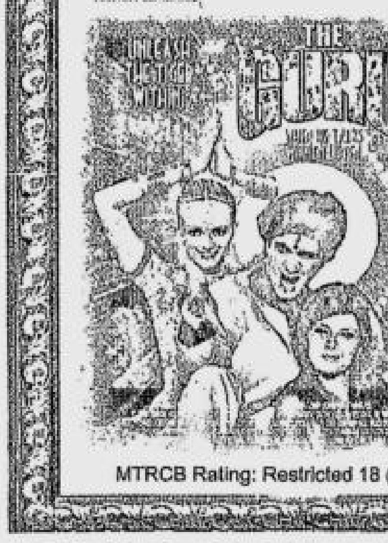

A COMEDY ABOUT FINDING THE AMERICAN DREAM IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED WAY!

HEATHER GRAHAM **MARISA TOMEI**
& JIMI MISTRY

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6 GOLD (SDDS)	TREASURE PLANET
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	EXTREMIST
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3	

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6 (DOLBY)	EXTREMIST
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8	TOMAGANS
9	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

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4 (DOLBY)	DAREDEVIL
5	NYMPHA

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4	NYMPHA
5 (SDDS)	EXTREMIST

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Sampaquita
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Dilson	TOMAGANS
Lords	TOMAGANS
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3	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
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3	TREASURE PLANET
4	NYMPHA
5	TOMAGANS

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2	

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1	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYON NANDITO KA

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4 (SDDS)	DAREDEVIL
5 (DTS)	FOUR FEATHERS
6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7	EXTREMISTS

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2	DAREDEVIL

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1	DAREDEVIL
2	NYMPHA
3 (DTS)	NGAYON NANDITO KA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1	NYMPHA
2 (DTS)	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3 (DOLBY)	TREASURE PLANET
4	FOUR FEATHERS

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1	FOUR FEATHERS
2 (DOLBY)	TREASURE PLANET
3 (DTS)	NGAYON NANDITO KA
4	NYMPHA

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1	DEKADA
2	THEY
3 (DOLBY)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
4	

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2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3 (DOLBY)	AMAZON
4 (DTS)	HERO

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2 (DTS)	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3	BALAT SIBUYAS

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1 (SDDS)	
2	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3 (DTS)	BUKANG BIBIG
4	TOMAGANS

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1 (DOLBY)	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3 (DTS)	TREASURE PLANET
4	NYMPHA
5	BETTER THAN SEX

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3	FOUR FEATHERS

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1	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYON NANDITO KA
3	FOUR FEATHERS

Mega Center Mall
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1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	DAREDEVIL
3 (DTS)	NGAYON NANDITO KA
4	I SPY

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1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

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1	TOMAGANS
2	BETTER THAN SEX
3	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

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1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
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3	DAREDEVIL
4	HERO

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5	EXTREMISTS
6	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
7	NYMPHA
8	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CENTERPOINT
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1	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
2	THE EYE
3	DAREDEVIL
4	NYMPHA
5	EXTREMISTS
6	MAGNIFICO
7	FOUR FEATHERS
8	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
9	TREASURE PLANET
10	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	EXTREMISTS
2	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
3	MAGNIFICO
4	DAREDEVIL
5	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
6	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
7	DAREDEVIL
8	NYMPHA
9	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
10	AMAZON
11	FOUR FEATHERS
12	TREASURE PLANET

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	TREASURE PLANET
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	FOUR FEATHERS
4	DAREDEVIL
5	EXTREMISTS
6	DAREDEVIL
7	NYMPHA
8	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
9	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
10	THE EYE
11	MAGNIFICO
12	THEY

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	DAREDEVIL
2	TREASURE PLANET
3	EXTREMISTS
4	FOUR FEATHERS
5	THE EYE
6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
7	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
8	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
9	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
10	DAREDEVIL
11	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
12	NYMPHA

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
2	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
3	NYMPHA
4	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
5	TREASURE PLANET
6	FOUR FEATHERS
7	DAREDEVIL
8	EXTREMISTS

SM SOUTHMALL
8068888

1	FOUR FEATHERS
2	TREASURE PLANET
3	DAREDEVIL
4	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
5	THE EYE
6	DAREDEVIL
7	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
8	EXTREMISTS
9	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
10	NYMPHA

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	DAREDEVIL
2	BELOW
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	MAGNIFICO
6	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
7	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
8	TREASURE PLANET

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	TREASURE PLANET
2	CLOSED
3	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
4	HERO
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	DAREDEVIL
7	CLOSED
8	BETTER THAN SEX

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	DAREDEVIL
2	HERO
3	TREASURE PLANET
4	NYMPHA
5	FOUR FEATHERS
6	NGAYONG NANDITO KA

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	NYMPHA
2	DAREDEVIL
3	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
4	TREASURE PLANET

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
3	NYMPHA
4	EXTREMISTS

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	DAREDEVIL
2	LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	TREASURE PLANET
5	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
6	FOUR FEATHERS

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	DAREDEVIL
2	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
3	EXTREMISTS
4	TREASURE PLANET

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	FEMME FATALE
2	TREASURE PLANET
3	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
4	DAREDEVIL

THE PODIUM CINEMA
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1	**DAREDEVIL** 11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:50 END
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3	NGAYON NANDITO KA
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5	FOUR FEATHERS
6	NYMPHA

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2	TREASURE PLANET
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4	FOUR FEATHERS
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6	DAREDEVIL

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Rio: Never be sad, God has been most gracious

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—TV talk show host Rio Diaz-Cojuangco has been released from Stanford University Hospital in California, United States where she underwent new treatment for cancer.

She returned to her home in San Francisco in time for the eighth birthday of her daughter Claudia on Saturday.

"I am home now because it is Claudia's birthday this weekend," Rio told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Claudia is her second child with Negros Occidental Rep. Charlie Cojuangco. The couple's other child is Jaime, 5.

Rio has a 20-year-old son, Ali, with singer Hajji Alejandro.

Rio said prayers enabled her to survive the new cancer treatment that she underwent at Stanford University Hospital.

"I really don't know what is exactly happening in my body. The results remain to be seen, it's by the day," said the former vice mayor of Pontevedra town, Negros Occidental.

"They (the doctors) are monitoring me closely, but I know the prayers have helped me cope and have brought me the best care possible," she added.

Rio flew back to the United States last Jan. 18, after spending the holidays here with her family in Pontevedra town, about 48 kilometers south of Bacolod.

Her friends began to storm the heavens with prayers when they learned that Rio resumed new treatment for cancer last month.

She was diagnosed to be suffering from cancer of the colon in 1999. Last year, her doctors told her that the cancer was detected in her blood and was all over her body.

Cojuangco said she was thankful for the prayers even from people she doesn't know.

"Never be sad. God holds me so lovingly tight," she said. "God has been most gracious, I mean that sincerely. Prayers have been answered in so many countless ways, God is always good no matter what."

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2 NYMPHA	2 FOUR FEATHERS	2 THE GURU (EXCLUSIVE) 12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 DAREDEVIL 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20	2 NGAYONG NANDITO KA
3 DAREDEVIL	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 DAREDEVIL 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30	OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 28 & Mar. 1	3 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20	3 FOUR FEATHERS
4 NGAYONG NANDITO KA	4 THE EYE		4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE [illegible]40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	4 EXTREMIST
	5 NGAYONG NANDITO KA		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 FOUR FEATHERS 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30	5 TREASURE PLANET
	6 DAREDEVIL			
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Romnick inspired to perform by wife Harlene in Nihonggo play

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Ann Carvajal

DULAANG UP, the official performing group for theater of my alma mater University of the Philippines Diliman, with the Center for International Studies (East and Southeast Asian Division-Japan) will stage the replication of **Namiki Gohei**'s Kanjincho "The Subscription List," translated in Filipino by **Jerry Respeto**.

It's the first original Japanese play to be mounted by Dulaang UP. **Tony Mabesa** directs, with **Jina Umali** as co-director. Performances on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m., March 1 and 2 at 3 p.m. at the University Theater in UP Diliman; March 14 at 8 p.m., Mar 15 and 16 at 2:30 p.m. at the CCP Main Theater.

Performances will be in Nihonggo and Filipino.

Kanjincho is a classic Kabuki play that shows interplay of loyalty and courage. It stars Yoshitsune's strongman bodyguard Benkei, who with his quick wit and courage, saves his master and his attendants in a life-or-death situation.

This kabuki play is a favorite among Japanese, because it gives full play to such sentiments as loyalty to one's master, compassion, and feudal-style justice.

Romnick Sarmenta plays the lead. He admits that acting in theater is more gruelling than acting on TV and the movies.

"There are no retakes, especially for the Nihonggo version of this play," Romnick says. "I had to learn how to speak the language. Not just mouth the words. I must feel the lines. The audience is right there in front of you.

"Although their applause is instant gratification, it's added pressure to do your best and lessen fumbles because one wrong move and you can ruin the whole thing. Any actor can't bear the thought of making a fool of himself in front of a crowd and being a laughing stock."

Romnick is more than inspired to outdo himself in every performance because of his wife **Harlene (Bautista)** and their adorable daughter. Their love story thrills me to no end.

Romnick and Harlene were childhood sweethearts but they eventually parted ways because show biz intrigues got in the way.

Yet, fate made them find each other again. Romnick smiles as he looks back at those tempestuous times.

"Remember you were our first witness because during our first date when we reconciled, you saw us at a bar?," he tells me.

"I kept trying to convince Harlene that all that loveteam talk about **Sheryl Cruz** and me were nothing more than publicity stunts. You know how it is, '*kampo-kampo, buyo-buyo*.' Unfortunately, she was swayed because we were still so young then.

"Looking back, the temporary separation did us a lot of good. It made our foundation stronger, so we're sure that our marriage will withstand whatever pressure that may come our way in the future."

I echoed the same sentiment. Sometimes, couples have to be apart in order to see what they had together.

The post-Valentine love spell was very much in the air at Café Kilimanjaro that night. Romnick and I had a long, engaging chat while he was waiting for Harlene to finish her taping.

"When I'm not busy, I wait up for her, bring her to the studio and fetch her or we meet up," Romnick says. "*Kawawa naman* if she'll drive *pa*. She's already tired from taping."

Soon enough, Harlene arrives and their sweetness almost caused me a diabetes attack. If only most show biz couples of the "make-up to break-up variety" would learn a thing or two from them, there would be less clandestine affairs and broken homes in the biz.

By choice

I HAD no intention to cause any friction when I wrote in a previous column that Giselle Sanchez and her hubby might be having marital problems because till now, they still don't have a baby, that's why I put it in an open-ended question form.

Giselle e-mailed me to clarify that they are happily married and it's by choice that they still don't want to have a baby.

I'm glad to hear that because as a true-blue romantic, I always rejoice when love triumphs.

As I always say, when all else fails, love prevails.

Personal

MUCHISIMAS gracias to **Cris Escudero**, the cool owner of my new fave resto in Greenbelt 2, Cena, for the yummy treat he gave my honey **Allan** and I. Their food is incredibly yummy but not pricey.

I recommend that you sample the salmon in parchment paper, chicken saltimboca, phylo crab and lava cake. You'll have a full tummy without needing to empty your pocket that much.

Birthday cheers and love to my all-time best *amiga* **Alanna Lopez-Montelibano**.

Miga, thanks for standing by me through thick and thin, sick or sin.

Palangga gid taka.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com, jaimealsan@yahoo.com

The Sexbomb Girls

From page A28

with BMG Records (Pilipinas).

"Bakit Papa," the debut single, was also made the title of The Sexbomb's successful first movie.

Their debut album, "Unang Putok," sold 100,000 units, making it a certified double platinum.

The Sexbomb also released a Christmas album, "Wish Ko sa Pasko," also under BMG Records.

For ticket inquiries, call Casino Filipino-Parañaque at 521-5777, Sitcom Live Comedy Bar in Las Piñas at 872-2454 or TicketNet at 911-5555.

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Mardi Gras amidst the green.

Get wild at the Mardi Gras Parade at Greenbelt 3 on March 24, 6PM. And catch a glimpse of the paraders from February 26 to March 4.

Groovin' and Drinkin', March 4, 6-8pm. March 5-28, Wednesdays 12:30 and 6pm, Sundays 12:30pm.

Mardi Gras Lecture Series, 6pm, Greenbelt 3 Level3: March 13 and 20 with Prof. Ron Nethercutt March 27 with Cousin Hoagy of NU 107.

Incontinasia Arts Festival. Starting March 6.

AYALA CENTER

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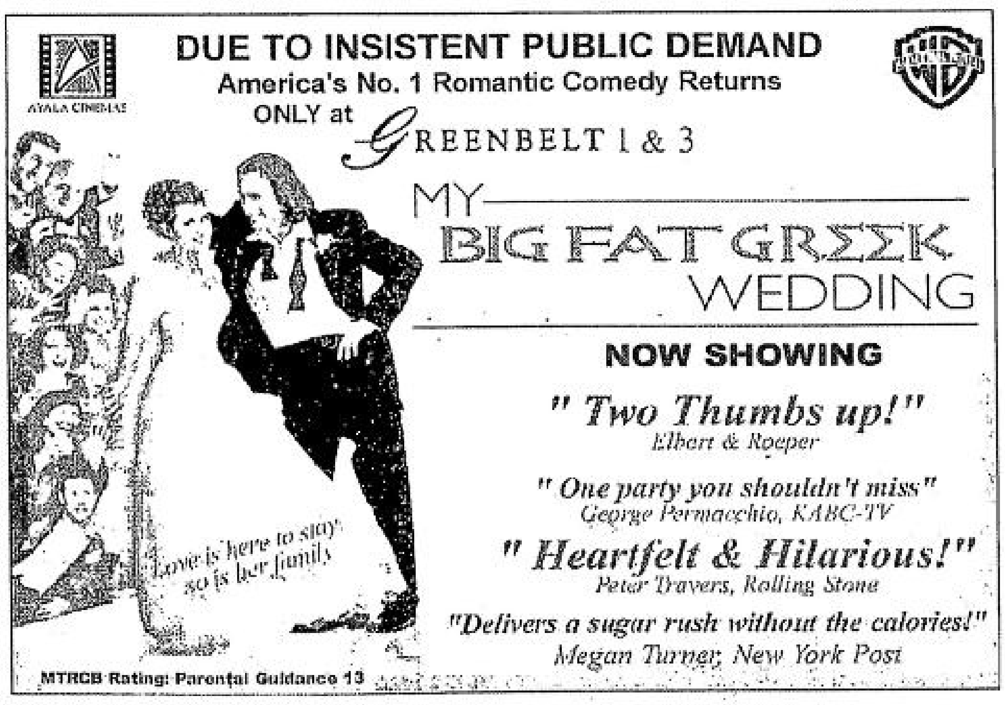
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Love is here to stay. so is her family
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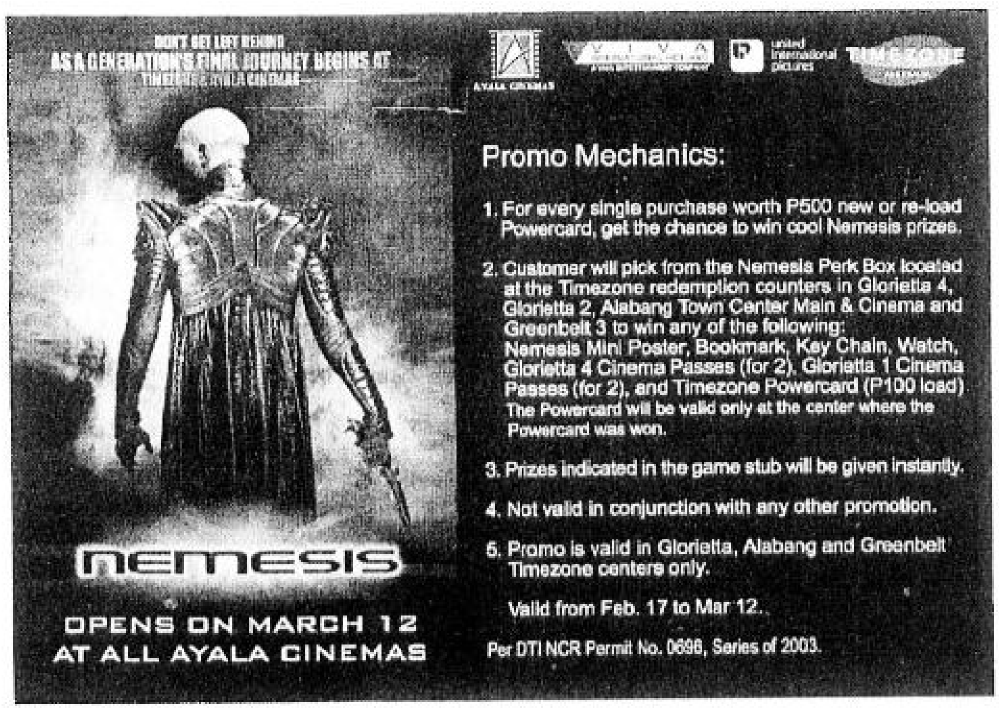
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Can Bb. Pilipinas beauty crowns guarantee a bright future?

By Marinel R. Cruz

DESPITE the continuing popularity of beauty contests in the Philippines, young Filipinas no longer consider joining them a stepping stone to a better future.

That is according to Wendell Capili, an associate dean in the University of the Philippines and a "beauty pageant analyst."

"They would rather work than join beauty contests," Capili told the INQUIRER.

He said the country has not been very successful for the past many years in producing winners who would eventually triumph in international beauty pageants, unlike in the '60s and '70s which saw such Philippine representatives as Gemma Cruz, Aurora Pijuan and Melanie Marquez being crowned Miss International and Gloria Diaz and Margarita Moran taking the Miss Universe title.

The cause, according to analyst Capili, is also the root of many other Philippine problems —poverty.

"Young women are forced to help their families even at a very young age so that when they are old enough to join beauty contests, they already feel tired and wasted," said another pageant analyst, Ces Evangelista.

Both pageant analysts are also talent scouts who trained hopeful young women for a chance to vie for the Binibining Pilipinas titles this year. Both were present during the pageant's elimination night last Feb. 1 at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City.

Capili and Evangelista credits themselves for discovering 2002 Miss Tourism International Michelle Reyes and 2001 Bb. Pilipinas Universe Zorayda Ruth Andam.

28 out of 140

Last Feb. 1, after a four-month search, 28 young women were chosen as finalists for this year's Bb. Pilipinas pageant. All 12 that Capili and Evangelista had trained were among the 28.

The marathon 12-hour final elimination was conducted at the Foodome of the Araneta Center.

A total of 140 young women joined this year's search for the three who would wear the Bb. Pilipinas crowns—Bb. Pilipinas Universe, Bb. Pilipinas International and Bb. Pilipinas World.

"To win, what we need are women who are not only pretty and smart in interviews, but who are rooted in their being Filipinos," Evangelista said.

He said he was impressed that many of those who joined the contest this year came from prominent schools and some were honor students. "One is even a gold medalist in taekwondo in the recent Southeast Asian Games," he said.

Last years' winners—Bb. Pilipinas Universe Karen Loren Agustin, Bb. Pilipinas International Kristine Alzar and Bb. Pilipinas World Katherine Anne Manalo—are members of the board of judges this year.

Aggressive bets

Alzar said she is positive that this year's batch of candidates could produce winners in international pageants. "This year's candidates are more aggressive than those in the previous years," she observed.

Picking the finalists this year would be a tough task, according to Agustin. While she empathized with the young women who would not be chosen, she said it was her responsibility as a judge to pick those who could compete under international standards.

Manalo said it was hard to actually pinpoint the characteristics that make a winner, but she added that height is a very important feature.

"While a 5-foot-8 Bb. Pilipinas contestant like me may be tall, I'm just an average contestant under international standards," Manalo explained.

WINNERS WANTED. (L-R) Kate Sephora Baesa, Carla Gay Balingit, Ma. Elena Andaya, Carolyn Ramos, Joy de los Reyes, Jhezarie Javier, Diana Sadie, Anna Kathrina Ashby, Ma. Althea Rose Mauricio and Gladys Cruz

MARJORIE Torres, Sanya Smith, Penelope Grulla, Jeramie Alagon and Farrah Casilda Tuballa

ARIANE Garcia, Noela Mae Evangelista and Nilda Perelonia

"Height really matters," she stressed. "Our representative to competitions abroad won't be a standout if she's not tall."

Added Alzar: "A girl can be really very beautiful but still have no impact. Our contestants have to have that quality."

Who made it

Former Bb. Pilipinas World Ruffa Gutierrez and actor Richard Gomez will host the finals and coronation night on March 15 at the Araneta Coliseum. Initially, TV host TJ Manotoc, son of Miss International '70 Aurora Pijuan, was supposed to be Ruffa's co-host, but previous commitments eliminated him.

This year's Bb. Pilipinas candidates are Jacquelyne Inoferio, Ma. Rafaela Yunon, Jhezarie Javier, Diana Sadie, Anna Kathrina Ashby, Ma. Althea Rose Mauricio;

Gladys Cruz, Ariane Garcia, Noela Mae Evangelista, Nilda Perelonia, Angela Corstorphan, Cherry Mae Bacarro, Angelica Sandel, Sheryl Lou Franco, Aloha Crisostomo, Kate Sephora Baesa, Carla Gay Balingit;

Ma. Elena Andaya, Carolyn Ramos, Joy de los Reyes, Anne Marie Falcon, Ruth Faye Toribio, Maria del Carmen Antigua, Marjorie Torres, Sanya Smith, Penelope Grulla, Jeramie Alagon and Farrah Casilda Tuballa.

All of them dream of a bright future and all, it is safe to assume, hope that a beauty title could give it to them?

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	NGAYON NANDITO KA
Ali 2	NYMPHA
Ali 3	TREASURE PLANET
Ali 4	DAREDEVIL
Ali 5	FOUR FEATHERS
Ali 6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 7	EXTREMISTS

FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS

Farmers 1	LEGEND OF CROCODILE
Farmers 2	DAREDEVIL

ARANETA COLISEUM

FEB 28	MARTIN & POPS CONCERT
MARCH 1	JOLINA MANIA CONCERT
MARCH 3 & 5	NCA 7 COCK DERBY

ELEPHANT WORLD

FEB 27	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 28	10 AM / 3 PM
MAR 1	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

THEATER
MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	KAPAG BUMAYO PALAY / UNFAITHFUL CONCUBINE
ODEON	DAREDEVIL
ODEON-2	MALDITA / STRIP SHOW
ROBEN	BUKANG BIBIG
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	HALLOWEEN / ONE WRONG TURN

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NYMPHA
CORONET B	FEMME FATALE / STICKMEN
QUEZON-1	BUKANG BIBIG
REMAR	DAREDEVIL
REMAR-2	BUKANG BIBIG

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	EIGA SAI 2003
CINEMA-2	TREASURE PLANET

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NYMPHA
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HERO
CINEMA-6	TOMAGAN
CINEMA-7	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-8	ABANDON
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	DEREDEVIL
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-12	4 FEATHERS
CINEMA-14	AMAZON
CINEMA-15	THEY

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

Double comeback for director Elwood Perez

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT'S been a long time since we talked to film director **Elwood Perez**, so we were glad to catch up with him recently. We were even happier when Elwood informed us that, after a decade of relative inactivity, he was finally making his directorial comeback this March with Viva's "Lupe," a sexy drama topbilling **Andrea del Rosario**, **Leandro Muñoz** and **Jordan Herrera**.

Even better, it turns out that Elwood has completed a second film, starring yet another new sex kitten named **Belinda Bright**, with the working title, "Shhhh!" So, Elwood is making a double comeback this year!

That's Elwood for you, always doing things bigger and better than many of his contemporaries in the directing trade. Small wonder that, when he was a hot hitmaker in the '70s and '80s, he was the pet of some of the biggest producers in the land.

And name stars (most of them female) wanted to be directed by him because he had a way of making them come up with performances that were more vivid and interesting than their usual output.

So, why did Elwood take such a long vacation from the directing scene? He shares that projects he was offered didn't excite him that much, and he had "other priorities" to attend to. Well, the important thing is that he's back, and raring to direct more films in his inimitably edgy, antsy way.

"Lupe" is about the wife of a seaman who is seduced by a stranger. But it turns out that the seduction has the blessings of her husband, who's impotent. That's why he makes a deal with the stranger to get his wife pregnant. —No wonder Elwood found the movie's material interesting enough to lure him out of his self-imposed retirement!

AIM homecoming

FELLOW alumni of the Asian Institute of Management, please be reminded that AIM's 35th anniversary Grand Alumni Homecoming will culminate with a homecoming party at 6 p.m. on March 7 at the Greenbelt 3 Lagoon area in Makati City.

MBM '83 is the Lead Host Batch this year. Other host batches are '88, '93 and '98, and honoree batches include '73 and '78. The event carries the theme, "Looking Back, Paying Forward."

The program features performances by AIM "Managing the Arts Program" graduate Joey Ayala, the UST Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Philippines, the Madrigal Singers and the Apo Hiking Society.

On Feb. 28, the AIM Alumni Golf Challenge tees off at the TAT Filipinas Golf Course in San Pedro, Laguna.

Batch '83's benificiaries include the Laura Vicuna Foundation, L.I.F.E. (Leukemic Indigents Fund Endowment), and three public schools through an upgrade of their library and computer facilities. Call the AIM Alumni Association Office at 750-1010, local 2103.

Meanwhile, the Managing the Arts Program marks its first anniversary with a silent auction of valuable art pieces donated by the Metrobank Foundation, including paintings by Olmedo, Luz, Alcuaz, Sanso and MAP alumni.

The artworks may be previewed starting Feb. 27 at the JV del Rosario Rooms 1-4, 4th floor, ACCM bldg. Opening ceremonies will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. on March 6. Proceeds of the auction will go to the AIM Scholarship Fund for Artists.

AIM established the Managing the Arts Program to help artists-managers develop their leadership potential and bridge the gap between business goals and the artistic mission.

The art auction is the first major project of MAP alumni. For details, please call 892-4011, local 422.

Ang4Gettables at Merk's

EVERY Thursday in March, the popular Ang4Gettables will be featured in a dinner show at Merk's Bar & Bistro, Greenbelt 3, in Makati. The singing group's combination of wholesome comedy and topnotch musicality has clicked with audiences here and abroad.

The group's members are **Pinky Marquez**, **Dyords Javier**, **Isay Alvarez** and **Bimbo Cerrudo**, gifted soloists in their own right. When they perform together as the Ang4Gettables, it's quadruple the fun!

NCCA screens Filipino film classics

FILM buffs keep complaining that they can't watch Filipino film classics these days. Well, they should take advantage of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts ongoing Cinema Paraiso exhibit, which includes film screenings until April 4.

On view at the NCCA building in Intramuros are these interesting old movies, courtesy of the commission's cinema committee:

March 3, "Waray Waray" (1954), directed by **F.H. Constantino** and starring **Nida Blanca** and **Nestor de Villa**.

March 4, "Kundiman ng Lahi" (1959), with **Charito Solis**, directed by **Lamberto V. Arellana**.

March 5, "Dalagang Ilokana" (1954), starring **Gloria Romero**, **Ric Rodrigo** and **Dolphy**, with direction by **Olive La Torre**.

March 6, "Sister Stella L" (1984), directed by **Mike de Leon**, with **Vilma Santos** playing the title role.

March 7, "Himala" (1982), with **Nora Aunor**, directed by **Ishmael Bernal**.

March 10, "Dawn of Freedom" 1944, starring **Leopoldo Salcedo** and **Fernando Poe**, directed by **Abe Yutaka** and **Gerardo de Leon**. (To be concluded.)

Kelly Salcedo

KELLY Grace Salcedo, a promising young singer of Puerto Rican descent, will perform at Monk's Dream in a special show at 9:30 p.m. on Feb. 27 (Thursday). Her back-up band is led by **Mon Pestano**.

Kelly will sing pop, jazz, rhythm and blues, soul, and OPM numbers. Monk's Dream is at Power Plant, Rockwell.

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FOUR FEATHERS P13 11:35,2:10,4:45, 7:20,10:00	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS GP 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	DAREDEVIL P13 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:10

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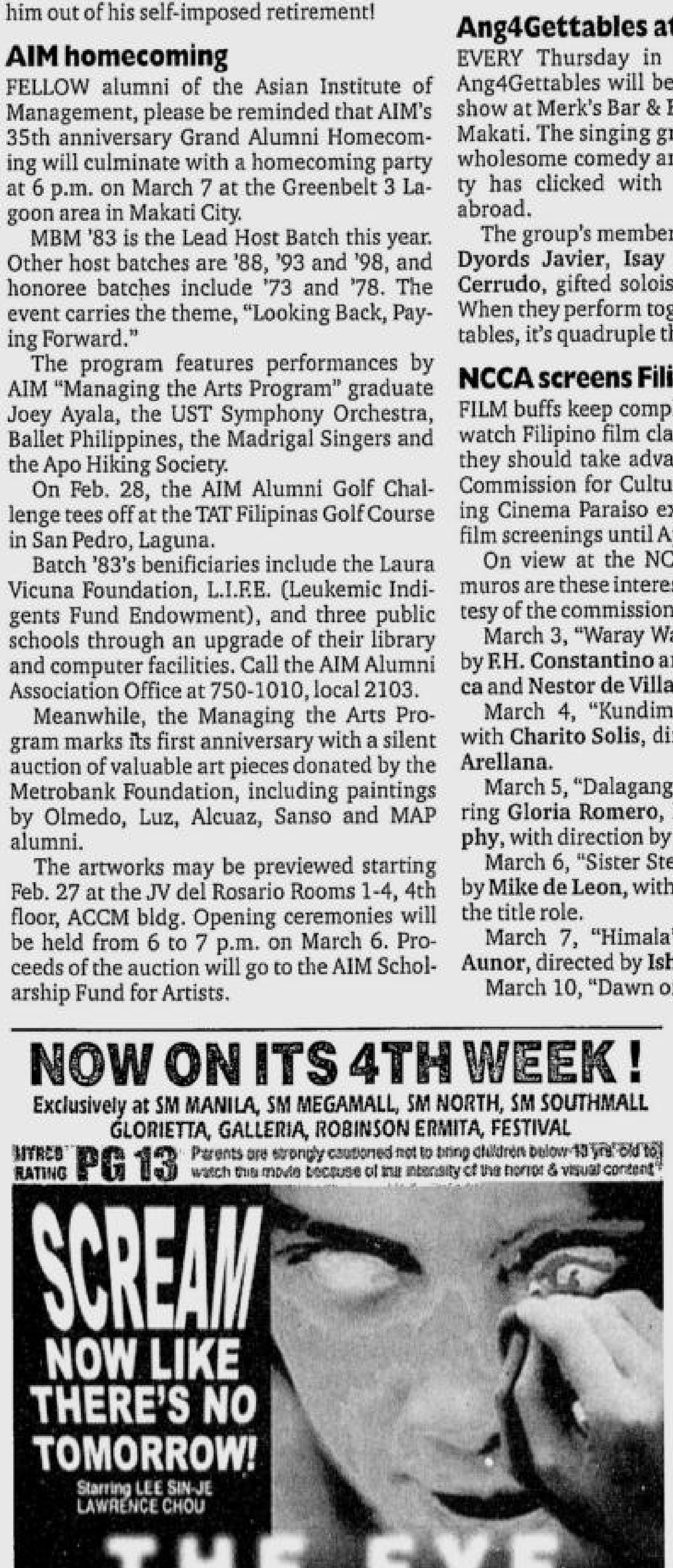

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ENTERTAINMENT

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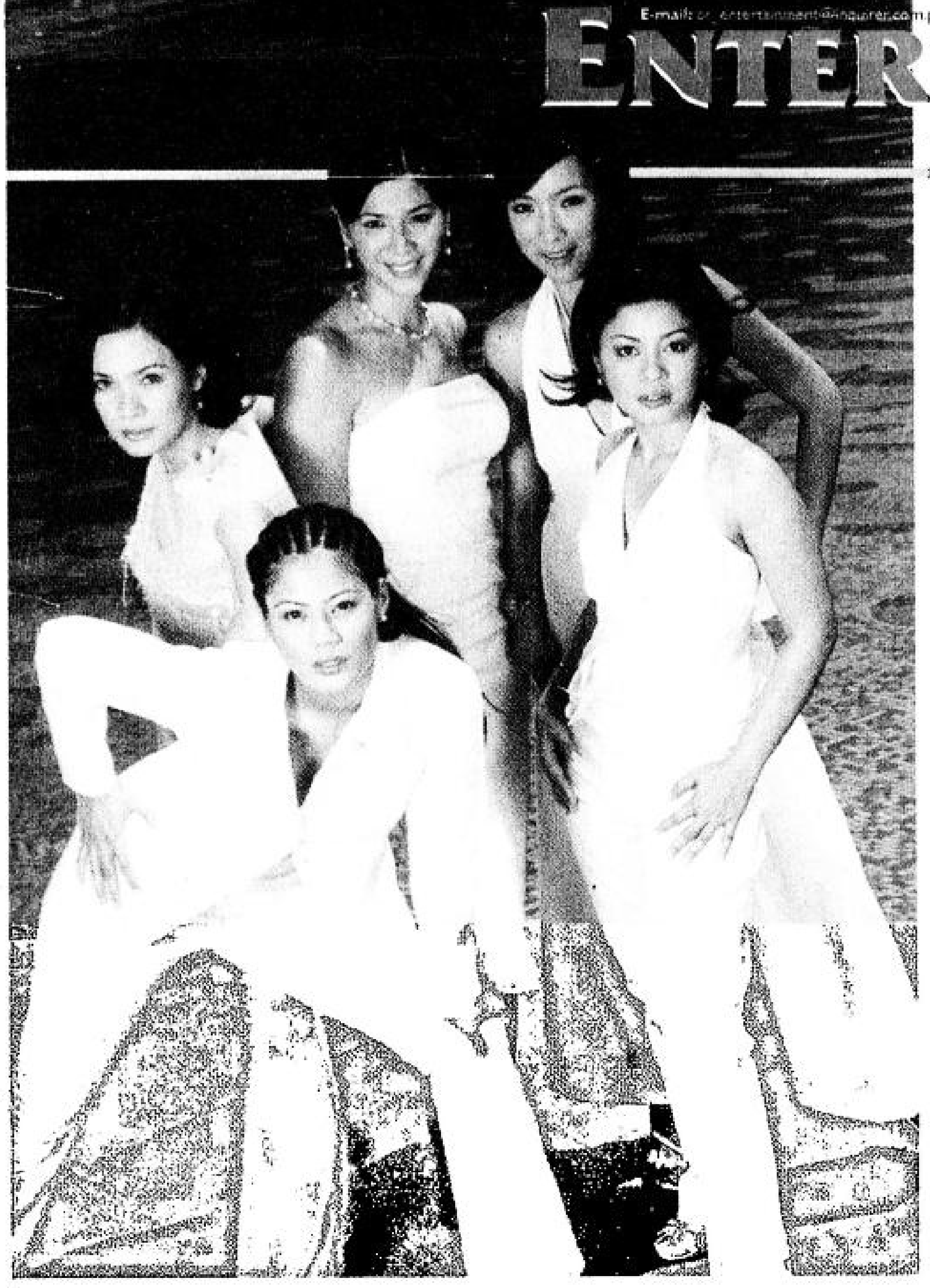
Editor Louie C. Camino



LIFESTYLE SHOW BABES. ABS-CBN News Channel hosts (from left) Reema Chanco, Angel Jacob, Pinky Webb, Pia Guanio and Cheri Mercado.

Life is beautiful on ANC

By Leah Salterio

THE ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) recently took a bold leap forward with the launch of its lifestyle news group on TV, ANC Life.

Five magazine programs were premiered on the nightly 6 p.m. block (with replays at 11 p.m.), to meet the tastes and needs of a young, upscale audience, thus boosting the station's power lineup of news, current affairs and business programs.

The shows started with a dream, according to Anjie Blardony Ureta, production unit head for ANC Life.

"Then we got people to share that dream with us," she says.

Anjie handpicked everyone in the team, from the production assistant and writer to executive producer, director and host. She is thankful that everyone whom they tapped to be on ANC Life was immediately receptive to the idea.

Passionate

"The hosts, especially, are all passionate about the show," Anjie grants. "None of them even asked how much they are getting. They're in it for the experience and the team spirit."

Reema Chanco will put some fun into gadget and motoring with "G-Force," Pia Guanio will bring update in sports lifestyle with "The Score," Angel Jacob will deliver weekly dose of wellness in "Lifessence," Pinky Webb will guide viewers to fine living in "Uptown," while Cheri Mercado will continue hosting "Coffee Talk."

The girls stepped out of their comfort zone to meet the challenge of a more daunting field -- lifestyle journalism.

Anjie points out the choices for the lady hosts were made after a thorough planning with the rest of the team at ANC Life.

"We are very careful with choosing people with the same vision," Anjie says. "We don't need someone who will take off her clothes or we can't just get people who will only read the script and parrot what's in it. I would rather work with women who are accomplished, intelligent, articulate and credible. That is to keep up with ANC's commitment to deliver news 24/7."

Counter-programming

The ANC Life 6 p.m. block was launched as a counter-programming with the news on free TV.

"The lifestyle shows air after the news on ANC, so we have a relaxed audience watching the lovely girls," Anjie says.

Yet, despite the new program genre, Anjie insists the lifestyle shows do not veer from the upscale viewing market that ANC caters to.

"We've establish the market of ANC which is male, 40 years and above," Anjie explains. "With the lifestyle shows, we simply want to bring in more women and young-adult viewers, and eventually make ANC a viewing habit."

Reema, who got her first break on-cam in "The Exchange," turns into a spunky gadget girl in "G-Force" on Tuesdays. The new program comes fully loaded with fun and information -- from the latest tools in the market in "Gadget Prophet" to previews of the sleekest cars and accessories in "The Showroom" and "Genext."

Pia, who gained fame on TV as the lovely Traffic Angel on the chopper, takes on the sporting life in "The Score," which airs Wednesdays.

The program gives one a ringside ticket to athletic activities that promote fitness and recreation.

Sports icons

Each week, "The Score" delivers pulsating action, back-to-back with the interviews with champions and sports icons in "Half Time," the latest trends in sports fashion and accessories in "The Locker," places to chill in after sweating it out in "Time Out," tips on handling sports injuries in "Sports Rx" and blow-by-blow instructions on the basics of lesser-known or extreme sports in "Out of Bounds."

It helps that Pia is a certified sports buff who plays a mean game of basketball, loves the thrill of a car chase down the tracks and is equally adept at an assortment of racquet and water sports.

Executive producer for "The Score" is seasoned sports commentator and radio personality Jude Turcuato.

"Lifessence" with Angel on Thursdays, is a health program that addresses wellness for mind, body and spirit, as presented in straightforward and balanced lifestyle news reports.

"Lifessence" is directed by Carrie Jose, with Angela Colet as executive producer.

Techniques

Viewers will find out the latest techniques in exercise in "Fitness File," learn more about the prevention, control and treatment of various diseases and disorders in "Health Watch," discover wholesome and novel cuisine in "Lean n' Green," brush up on tips for diet planning in "Nutrition Facts."

Pinky hosts "Uptown," where she takes viewers to an excursion into the world of fine living, from beauty and glamor to fashion and shopping, food and entertainment, travel and recreation, design and architecture.

FIRST-TIME DIRECTORS. Raymond Lauchengco for "Uptown" and Maila Gumila for "The Score."

Pinky, who is a familiar face in broadcast news as one of the pioneer anchors of ANC, makes a graceful turnaround from delivering headlines to entering the glitzy world of lifestyle news.

In every episode, Uptown presents some of the most fascinating collectibles and the people who acquire them in "Objects of Desire," the cuisine scene with chefs and food critics in "Hot Dish," living spaces and work places that are designed to impress in "Dwellings," the latest on the designer racks in "Shop Talk," the perfect holiday destination in "Great Escapes" and intimate moments with interesting personalities in "My Space."

Tele-magazine

Joining Pinky in the show is events organizer and style correspondent JR Isaac, who will do on-the-scene reports on fashion shows and entertainment events in his weekly segment, "Scene in the City."

Cheri, meanwhile, has gained a following in the innovative weekend tele-magazine, "Coffee Talk," where she offers a stimulating buzz of interviews and features on Saturdays at 9 a.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Cheri has shared cups of inspiring ideas with young and accomplished Filipinos -- from icons to entrepreneurs, trendsetters to actors, painters and musicians.

Now on its third season, "Coffee Talk" is directed by Robert Quilao, with Anjie herself as executive producer.

"Uptown" airs Fridays, with Estelle Custodio as executive producer.

Directors

Two former show biz stars also joined ANC, not as hosts, but as first-time directors.

Singer-actor Raymond Lauchengco, who recently also turned to photography, now works behind the cameras for "Uptown."

It was during a guesting stint on "Coffee Talk," where Raymond was first offered to direct a lifestyle program on ANC. The broadcast communication graduate from the University of the Philippines was immediately receptive to the idea and within a few weeks, he was seen calling the shots for "Uptown."

Maila, who started out as a child performer in the popular children's show, "Kaluskos Musmos," is excited about her new job as director of "The Score." Finally, she can put to use her film course at Rockport's International Film and TV Workshops, which she completed in 1997. She worked as assistant director to Gina Alajar in the Viva TV series, "Habang May Buhay." Now, Maila is the one directly at the helm of "The Score."

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The Sexbomb Girls in casino concert

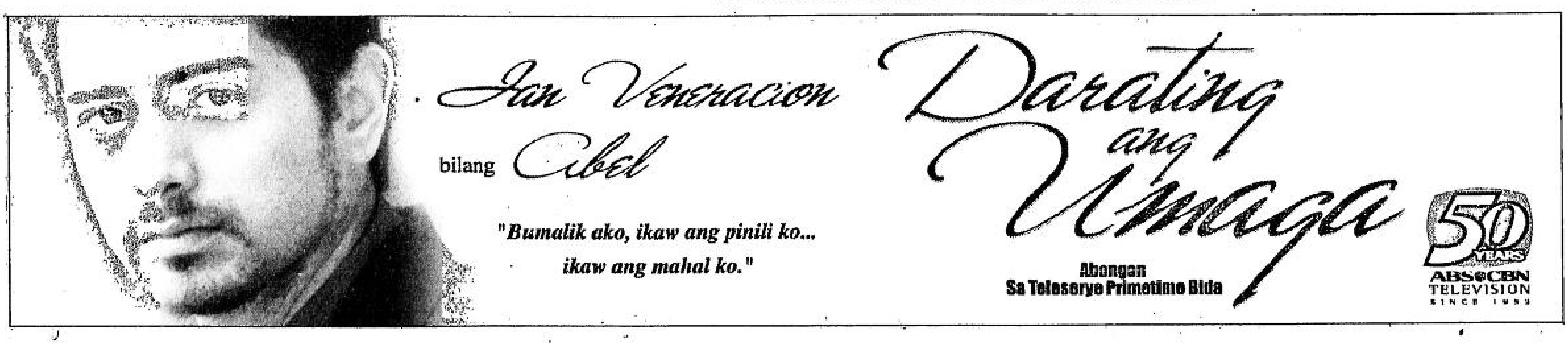
THE SEXBOMB Girls who enjoy a wide following from practically all the socio-demographic classes, take their sing-and-dance act to the concert hall of Casino Filipino-Parañaque on Dr. A. Santos Ave. in Parañaque City, tomorrow, Feb. 28.

"Yo... My Sexbomb" will see the popular group clad in their signature skimpy clothings, as they dance to the beat of their own songs such as the mega-hit, "Bakit Papa."

Veteran comedienne and TV host Ruby Rodriguez lends support to the girls in the show, mounted by Red Chair Production with Pagcor and Focus E Inc. Showtime is 9 p.m. Special guest is Jomari Yllana.

Riding on the crest of their popularity spawned and sustained by their regular appearance on "Eat Bulaga," the leading daily noontime variety show, The Sexbomb quickly parlayed their fame into recording

THE SEXBOMB/ A26



Ian Veneracion
bilang Cibel
"Bumalik ako, ikaw ang pinili ko...
ikaw ang mahal ko."
Darating ang Umaga
Abangan
Sa Teleserye Primetime Bida
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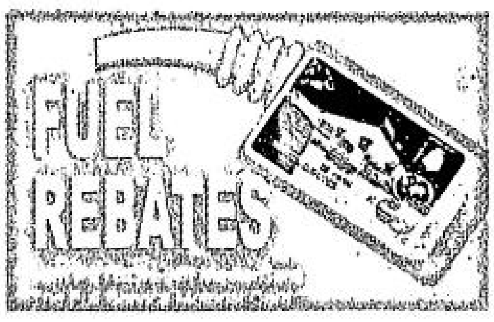

THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 27, 2003

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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MVP: I will resign than be a 'puppet'

By Abigail L. Ho

MANUEL Pangilinan yesterday said he was willing to resign from the board of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. if compelled to do so, but warned that a "puppet" board of directors in PLDT, which he heads as chief executive, would do the conglomerate more harm than good.

"Directors serve at the pleasure of the shareholders. But how would (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.) look if puppets would be sitting on its board? I never would want to act as a puppet for somebody else," he told reporters.

He was reacting to reports claiming that First Pacific would be nominating more "compliant" directors to the board of dominant carrier PLDT to allegedly help its owners, the Salims of Indonesia, facilitate the sale of their 24.4-percent stake in the industry giant.

While he did not comment on the veracity of the reports, he said any move to install a set of "puppet directors" would prove detrimental to PLDT's, and ultimately to First Pacific's, success in the longer term.

Pangilinan explained that a "cardinal rule" in the boardroom was for directors to guard the welfare of the company before bending to the shareholders' whims and wishes.

While directors served at the pleasure of the shareholders and had a responsibility to listen to these shareholders, he said a director's decision should always be based on "what's good for the company."

On June 3 last year, Pangilinan disclosed that he had a two-hour meeting with Anthoni Salim, heir apparent of First Pacific patriarch Seodono Salim, that ended up in him telling the younger Salim that he was ready to resign from the conglomerate should he be forced to accept the sale of First Pacific's stake in PLDT to the Gokongweis.

"I said I'm ready to resign. I still am. I'll take my chances. I don't want to put First Pacific in that position," he said.

The PLDT board effectively forced the Gokongweis to withdraw from the deal when they were prevented from conducting a due-diligence audit on the company before the deal's exclusivity period lapsed in Sept. 30 last year.

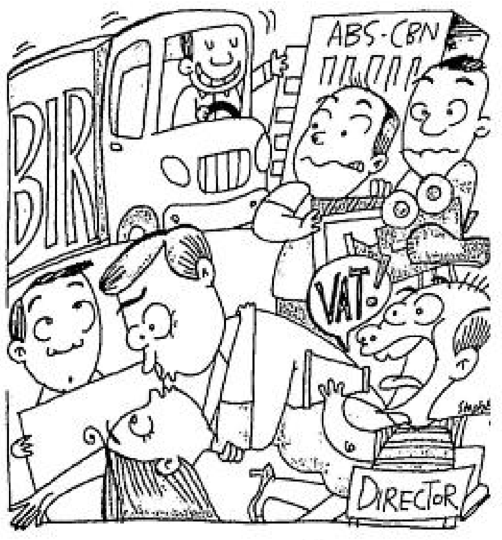
The board's main contention was that the Gokongweis were direct competitors of PLDT and should should not be allowed access to PLDT's books as well as given seats in its board of directors.

The Gokongweis own the second largest landline provider, Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. The company recently launched its cellular service, Sun Cellular, through wireless arm Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc.

Pangilinan also said it would not make that much sense for First Pacific to sell its stake in PLDT as the conglomerate's two major assets were its food and telecommunications businesses.

"First Pacific has reached a

MVP/ B5



'BIR on Wheels' seeks to boost tax collection

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is launching a new revenue-raising tack called "BIR on Wheels," and its first stop: ABS-CBN.

The BIR started putting up its facilities at the ABS-CBN office last Monday and began its three-day operation yesterday.

BIR on Wheels aims to bring the services of the bureau to companies in a bid to encourage more tax payers and assist those who have concerns with regard their registration with the BIR.

With the BIR on Wheel's going to ABS-CBN, the bureau expects producers, talents as well as entertainers to avail themselves of its services, said Victoria de Leon, BIR director for information systems operations.

She explained that included in the services of

BIR/ B5

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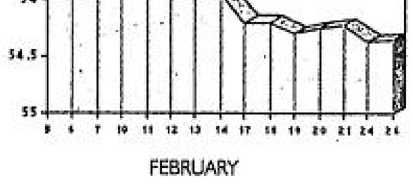


FEBRUARY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ **54.35 = $ 1**

As of 5 p.m., Feb.26, 2003

¥ **117.46 = $ 1**

As of 5 p.m., Feb.26, 2003

GOLD: **$352.50-353.00**

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 26, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end at 2-month low

SHARES fell to a two-month low yesterday, with players worried the peso's fall may be prolonged because of the Middle East crisis and concerned the fiscal deficit in January may be larger than expected.

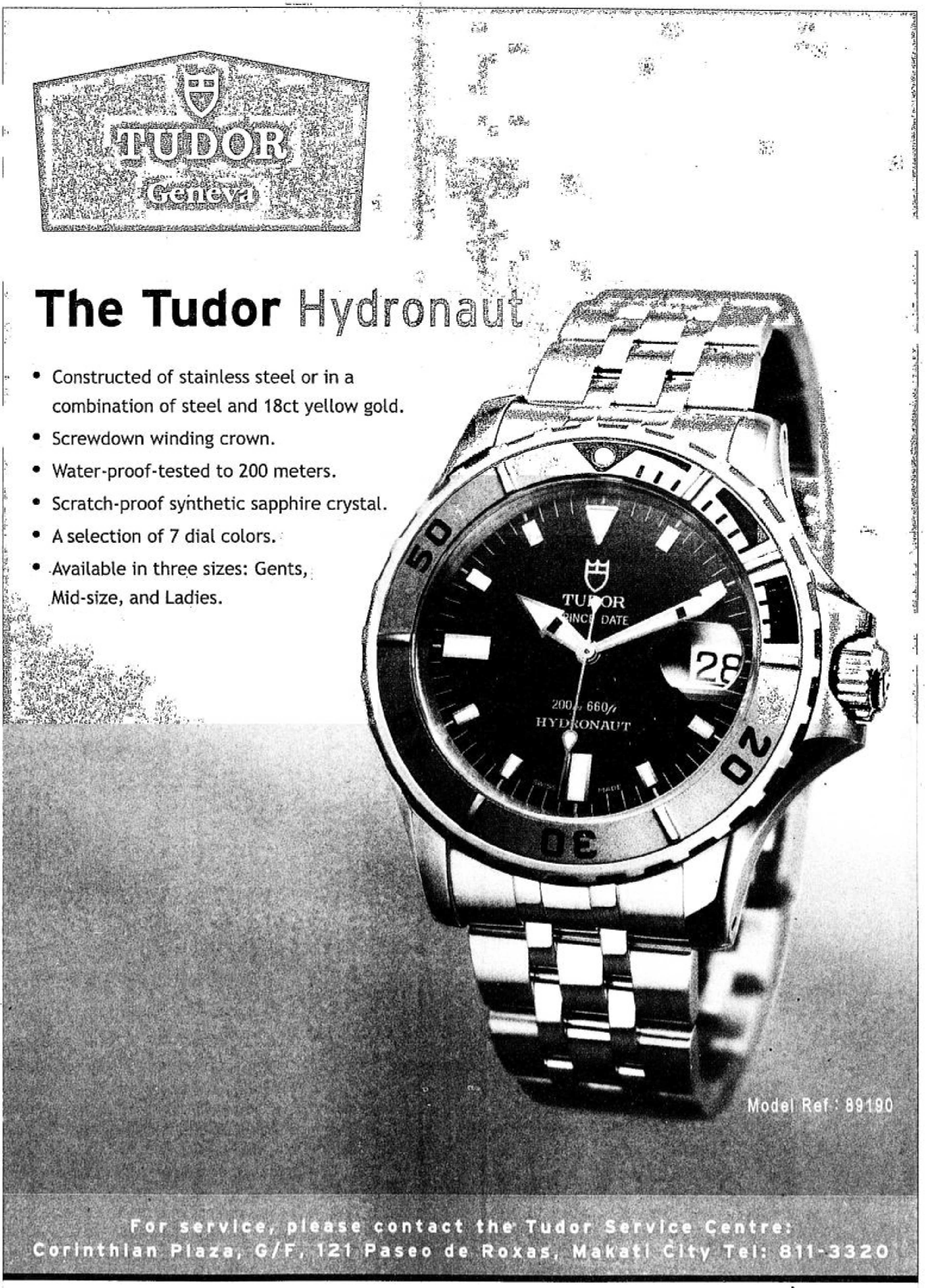
The main index almost broke the 1,000 psychological mark, ending 13.66 points or 1.35 percent down at the day's low of 1,000.27 points. It was the lowest close since Dec. 19.

"We have both internal and external worries," said Oliver Plana, head of sales of Asiasec Equities Inc.

Turnover climbed to P205.95 million from Monday's P133.64 million. The market was closed on Tuesday for public holiday. Losers were in a near three-to-one majority.

"It's so tough to convince investors to put capital into equities with so much uncertainties," Plana said.

Plana said the 1,000 level was just a psychological barrier, and was unlikely to be a strong support. He said the more important support level was at 980 points, the recent low registered in December. *Reuters*



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-Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
-Level 2, Mega B, SM Megamall
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-Rustan's Makati, Ayala Center

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SM Megamall
-Ground Level, SM City, Manila

WASHINGTON JEWELRY EMPORIUM
-Level 3, Mega B, SM Megamall
-Lower G/F, SM City, Manila
-G/F, SM City, North Edsa, Q.C.
-North Mall, Alabang Town Center
-G/F, Ali Mall
-G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
-G/F, Harrison Plaza

WASHINGTON WATCHES & JEWELRIES
-G/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
-Level R1, Power Plant Mall
Rockwell Center

Null and avoid

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

UNKIND words, i.e. some French, are flying in the business community nowadays towards the Supreme Court.

They have something to do with the 750-hectare reclamation project in Manila Bay, a joint venture between state outfit PEA and private firm Amari.

Word goes around, peppered with some French, i.e. bad words, that some big-time groups are conspiring to grab the project for themselves.

And that's why, at least based on the whispers, the Supreme Court issued a controversial ruling last July declaring the eight-year-old joint venture null and void.

Again, that's an eight-year-old deal—meaning, it's rather old. In all those years, you can get married, take an annulment and have children—not necessarily in that order.

***

PARDON my French, i.e. *sont les mos qui vont tres bien ensemble*, but I think the country is going to be the biggest loser here.

The Supreme Court may be far from being the most popular institution today, but the Supreme Court itself cannot let such loose talk destroy its credibility.

In its ruling on the PEA-Amari venture last July, the Supreme Court said the state could not sell the coastline to anybody, whether local or foreign or extraterrestrial.

The Supreme Court, in effect, in deciding multibillion business deals, again used our latest legal invention called "national patrimony."

You will recall, unless you just had a lobotomy, that somebody rubbed in that same argument also before the Supreme Court.

***

THAT invention allowed Mr. Somebody to snatch away the Manila Hotel from the actual winner in a public bidding for the hotel's privatization.

It was a landmark Supreme Court decision. It also elicited a lot of French in business. Still, nobody ever thought it would keep on popping up someday.

I didn't quite get the Supreme Court's point on the PEA-Amari venture, but who is selling what here illegally again?

And all along, everybody thought it was a reclamation project. Amari would do all the reclaming with its own money, as the PEA just sat and waited for the profits.

Nobody is selling the coastline. Forgive my French, but *oui, est un* lot of bull. In a reclamation project, the state does not sell the coastline. It just moves the coastline.

***

BUT, of course, Supreme Court justices know better than all of us combined. Their word is law, even if it kills a lot of us who invest our lifetime savings in the stock market.

Involved in the venture are such publicly listed companies like Prime Orion and Cyberbay. They are part of the Amari consortium, together with firms listed in Thailand.

It so happens that the consortium already spent a lot of money for the project. As I said, its approval took place eight years ago or sometime in 1995.

That is actually the point that Francis Ed. Lim, counsel of Ital-Thai, a member of the consortium, raised before the Supreme Court.

It was, Lim pointed out, an in-

BREAKTIME/ B3

Hassle-free taxpaying now a reality, BIR says

By Michelle V. Remo

FINALLY, paying taxes is now hassle-free.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue has implemented the electronic filing and payment system (EFPS) and a "substituted filing" program that will allow taxpayers to file their income tax returns without having to queue for hours.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said in an interview on Monday that the new systems should encourage the public to pay their taxes on time.

BIR director Victoria de Leon explained that through EFPS, companies could file various BIR forms, including income tax returns, for their employees through the Internet.

EFPS was actually implemented in April last year, she said, but it initially covered large taxpayers and small businesses who volunteered to avail themselves of the service.

This year, the BIR is intensifying its efforts for the EFPS to cover more small businesses, she said.

De Leon said as of January this year, there were already 40 small businesses who volunteered to file their employees' ITRs and other BIR forms using the EFPS.

She said to qualify for the service, one should enroll by writing a letter to the BIR commissioner and include in the letter necessary registration information, such as registered company name, date of incorporation, address and contact numbers, among others.

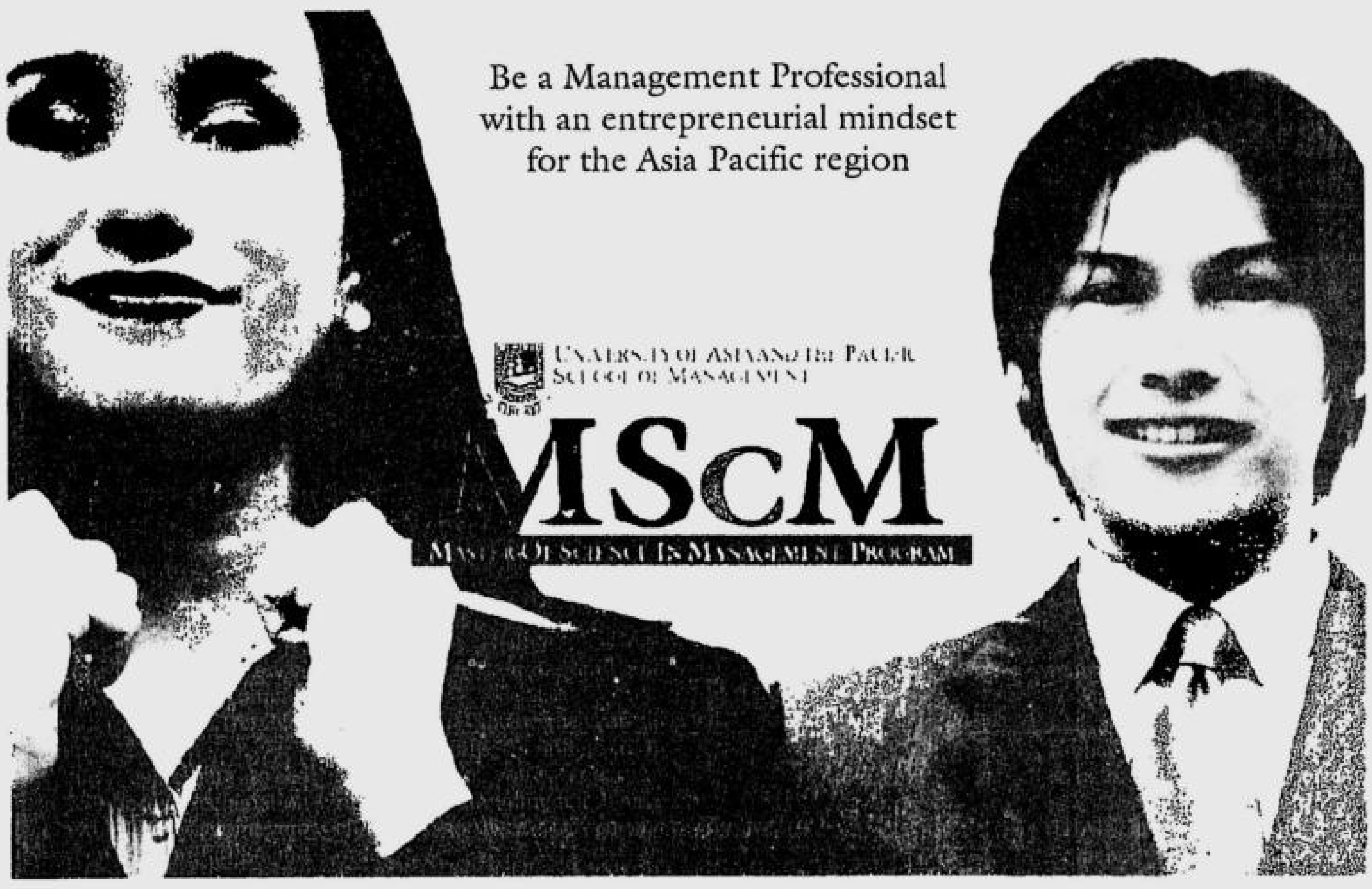
The enrollment is free of charge and the processing of the application normally takes a week, after which the BIR will notify the applicant of its enrollment to the EFPS.

Users of the EFPS can file BIR forms and pay online.

When making electronic payments through the EFPS, a company will have to state the name of the bank where it has an account and, upon entry, will be taken to the bank's website, where the bank account number has to be encoded.

After date processing, a confirmation of the payment will appear on the screen.

De Leon said the BIR would outsource the EFPS service next year.



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For inquiries, call Ms. Clarisse Peteza at 637-0912 to 26 loc. 317 / 236 or e-mail mscm@uap.edu.ph
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It is envisioned to be a one-stop shop for both domestic and foreign buyers looking for reliable suppliers of raw materials and finished products in the Mindanao area.

The showroom has a computer-aided product directory of SMEs which will go online. It has a retail area on the ground floor, where the LANDBANK service desk is located.

The Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce & Industry Foundation has their offices at the second floor. The third floor has a training room that will be conducting SME Capability Build-Up Training Programs to give the SMEs at the Mindanao Product Showroom a good start.

This is part of a standard format integrated in all Product Showrooms to be set up by PHILSMED in key areas of the country as a continuing development program for SMEs. In one structure, therefore, it becomes a watering hole for business information and activities.

Guest of Honor and Keynote Speaker
Honorable Luis Lorenzo
CORD Secretary Region X
Secretary of Agriculture

Among the items for sale are agri-based produce both fresh and processed; coco by-products like charcoal; jusi fabrics, fashion accessories; gift items; semi-processed and processed forest products; pottery; furniture and furnishings; office supplies; tour packages; fresh and dried plants and flowers; antiques; woven abaca and sinamay materials; brasswares, ethnic products and others.

The project was made possible through the cooperation of:
Promote Cagayan De Oro Foundation, Inc.
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BUY MINDANAO PRODUCTS NOW!

Feb. inflation seen hitting 3.4%

By Clarissa S. Batino

INFLATION—a key indicator of movements in the prices of basic goods and services—will likely rise to 3.2 to 3.4 percent on higher petroleum prices and a weak local currency, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The peso remained volatile yesterday, but it closed at 54.35 from 54.37 to a dollar on Monday.

The central bank's estimate mirrors the 3.1- to 3.4-percent February forecast of the National Economic and Development Authority.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said, however, he personally expected inflation to settle at a conservative range of 3 to 3.2 percent.

"I believe that inflation will increase in February because of higher oil prices and a weaker peso. These factors are beginning to creep in to the inflation numbers," Buenaventura said.

He added that the market consensus on this month's inflation rate was at 3.1 to 3.5 percent.

The central bank keenly monitors inflation because its monetary policies must ensure that consumer prices are always kept stable.

Buenaventura said the peso had stabilized a bit compared to the previous week, although the general weakness was unavoidable, as economies, including the Philippines, was reeling from the impact of the conflict in the Middle East.

Despite rising consumer prices, Buenaventura said, the target of 4.5- to 5.5-percent inflation this year would still be met, although he would not rule out the possibility that the government's economic team would adjust the inflation target upward to factor in the impact of a looming war between the United States and Iraq.

Buenaventura said the central bank would not yet initiate an adjustment in inflation targets, but it would not oppose any such plans if it came from the other members of the Development Budget Coordination Committee.

Breaktime

From page B2

frastructure project. With the Supreme Court ruling, it seems the government 'is simply avoiding payment. What's that? Null and avoid?

***

LOOK, Lim told the Supreme Court—with all due respect, of course—the court only ruled that a contract was null and void. It said nothing about the payment.

Amari, Lim said, is not buying the reclaimed land. It is doing work for the government. The payment is the land it reclaims—or cash . . . if the government has it!

But the Supreme Court did not even bother to say how Amari should be paid for the work it already did before the Supreme Court made the famous ruling.

It's like this guy asks you to do a job, and after you do part of it, spending your own money, his twin says, "Ooops, time out, contract is not valid." You shoot the bastards.

That investment is about P9 billion. This is enough for members of the Amari consortium to lose their pants. Their public stockholders, in turn, lose their private parts.

***

THIS is where we now go into some legal whodunit work. You ready, detective?

Nothing was new in what the Amari group did for, with or on top of PEA. It said it relied on previous laws which allowed such a payment in kind for the reclamation job.

Its contract with the PEA even went through the LONG, sometimes also WINDING, approval process under two Presidents of the Republic.

It relied on "official government representation," says Lim's petition before the Supreme Court, when it entered into the contract and started doing the work.

All of a sudden the Supreme Court says, "Sorry, you lose your pants. The contract is not valid." It's just like a big surprise party!

***

ON the other hand, we are already getting used to the Supreme Court's throwing us some big surprises.

But Amari says that, maybe, the Supreme Court should invalidate the law that allowed such a repayment scheme, before it invalidated the payment of land to Amari.

It would seem that the government unjustly enriched itself despite the existence of laws to allow such a form of repayment, according to Lim.

"Worse," his petition says, "this sends an alarming message to the world that the government and its system of laws, including its Chief Executive, is a party whose word cannot be relied upon."

Hmm. It's just that, well, I thought the world already knew that.

***

"AS A LEADER in mass communications," a letter addressed to yours truly said, "your esteemed publication's invaluable participation in recognizing the benefits of the registry would ensure the success of the project."

Got it, amigo! How do you say "no" to that kind of flattery?

Actually, they only wanted me to go to their affair today at the Astoria Plaza Hotel in Ortigas Center to interview their boss for 15 minutes during my siesta time.

It's the so-called Philippine Association of Environmental Assessment Professionals, or Paeap, launching the "environmental auditors registration system."

From what I gather from the long and winding press release, they are trying to do the following:

"The Paeap, an organization of environmental professionals with the main purpose of establishing and promoting standards of excellence in the practice of environmental impact assessment and promoting the adoption of environmental management system, through funding support from the Canadian International Development Agency-Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkage Project and administrative support from Environmental Management Program for Industry Competitiveness, a UNDP-funded project, is implementing a project on the development of a registration system of environmental auditors in the country."

Oh, I see. That's good! Keep it up!

Growth to fall below target, Neda chief says

THE DOMESTIC economy may not grow as expected this year—currently set at 4.2 to 5.2 percent—because of spiraling crude prices.

"That is why we must look for ways to extract growth from the domestic economy to offset the impact of rising crude prices because there is really a danger of a slowdown," Neri, author of "Plan 747," admitted.

The economic program calls for 7-percent growth for seven straight years.

Even the government's inflation rate forecast of 4.5 to 5.5 percent this year is vulnerable to oil price spikes, Neri added.

Last year, the economy grew 4.6 percent.

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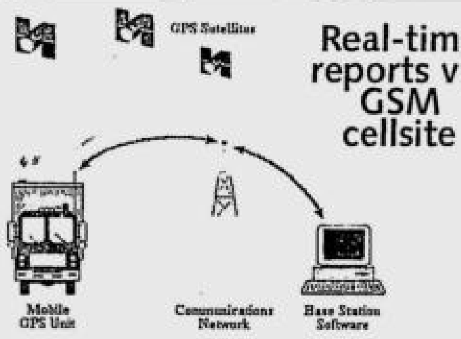

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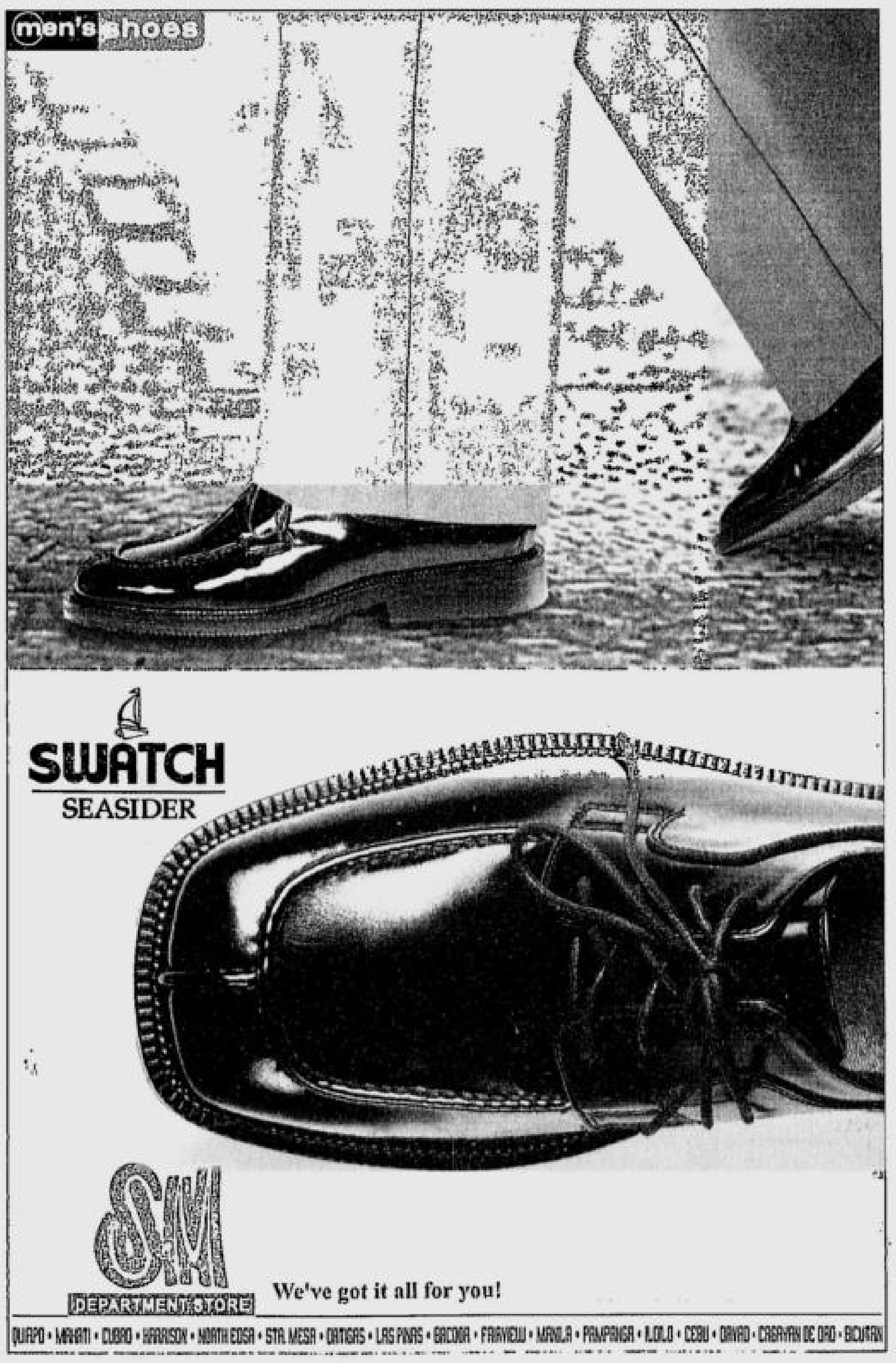
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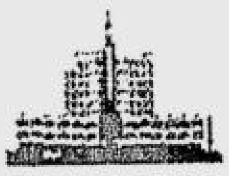

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE SPS. DANIEL A. CRUZ AND ZENAIDA VERGARA CRUZ HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY THEIR HEIRS PER DOC. NO. 141; PAGE NO. 129; BOOK NO. XI; SERIES OF 2003 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. J. REINE RHEA L. BUNOAN
PDI-Feb. 27, March 6 & 13, 2003

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Mr. Roland Schwanke
Head of Mission
Médecins Sans Frontières – Switzerland
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Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City

Or e-mail it to: msfch-ph@compass.com.ph

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Department of Science and Technology
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INVITATION TO APPLY ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) is inviting all interested bidders for our forthcoming public bidding for:

150 BOXES KODAK PERSONNEL MONITORING FILMS

Issuance of Eligibility requirements : **Feb. 28, 2003**
Pre-bid conference : To be announced later
Bidding : To be announced later

The approved budget is Five Hundred Seventy Thousand Pesos (P570,000.00)

For inquiries interested parties may contact the PBAC Secretariat at Tel. Nos. **929-6011** to **19** loc. **275** (c/o Julie Mendoza).

The Bids and Awards Committee and the Institute reserve the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect thereto, accept bids as may be deemed advantageous thereto or postpone the bidding for whatever cause it may deem proper.

In case of failure, a re-bidding shall automatically be scheduled five (5) calendar days after the announcement of failed bidding at the same time and place as the first bidding.

(Sgd.) **ALUMANDA M. DELA ROSA, Ph.D.**
Acting Director

(PDI - Feb. 27, 2003)

BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ACCREDITATION AND TO BID

The BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT invites interested parties to apply for accreditation and to bid for a **ONE YEAR WATER SUPPLY CONTRACT OF FIVE THOUSAND (5,000) CUBIC METERS PER DAY WITH AN APPROVED BUDGET COST OF TWENTY PESOS (P20.00) PER CUBIC METER.**

The bid documents shall contain the Instruction to Bidders utilizing the two-envelope system. Only bids of accredited shall be accepted.

Accreditation/Registration forms and bid documents can be obtained at the BWD Purchasing Office after payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00).

Deadline for obtaining Accreditation/Registration form is on March 7, 2003.

BWD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities in the bids and accept bids most advantageous to the District.

BWD PBAC (IN-HOUSE)

(PDI - Feb. 20 & 27, 2003)

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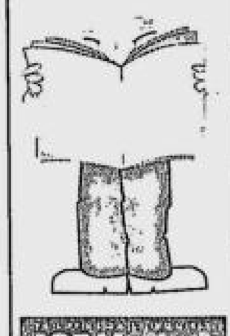

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The tender dossier is available for collection at following mail address:
Movimondo, Jariol Building 2,
Tibanga Highway, 9200
Iligan City, Lanao del Norte,
Mindanao, Philippines

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

March 28th, 2003 at 12:00 noon. Any tender received after this deadline will not considered.

TENDER OPENING SESSION

March 29th, 2003 at 12:00 noon at Movimondo, Jariol Building 2, Tibanga Highway, 9200 Iligan City, Lanao del Norte. Mindanao, Philippines.

Cell: 0916-5825352/0916-6138089

E-mail: moviphil@yahoo.it

For purpose of securing a copy of the bidding requirements, please write us at the address: Movimondo, Jariol Building 2, Tibanga Highway, 9200 Iligan City, Lanao del Norte. Mindanao, Philippines.

E-mail: moviphil@yahoo.it

(Sgd.) ENRICO CAMPIGLIA
Project Coordinator

(PDI - Feb 27, Mar 6, 13 & 20, 2003)

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Meralco board OKs lifting of 10% ownership limit

By Doris C. Dumlao

UTILITY giant Manila Electric Co. is set to lift the 10-percent ceiling on stock ownership that has guaranteed for many years the Lopezes of control of the company.

Under the Meralco charter, only the Lopez family is allowed to own more than 10 percent of the company.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Meralco vice president and assistant corporate secretary Gil San Diego reported that the Meralco board in a meeting on Monday had agreed to remove the ownership limit in its charter. This, however, is still subject to the ratification by the Meralco stockholders in their annual meeting on May 27 and an amendment to its articles of incorporation will still have to be approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The planned amendment will allow new investors to acquire shares equivalent to more than 10 percent of the company or even beyond the 19 percent presently held by the Lopezes.

"Meralco is now open to a change in ownership control as new investors can now own more than 10 percent of the company," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said.

Jomar Lacson, an analyst with Team Research, said the lifting of the ownership cap was positive as it would improve the liquidity of Meralco stocks even if it would inevitably compromise the Lopezes' controlling stake.

Other industry sources said the lifting of the 10- percent limit was likely a concession to the government, which would gain more value if it were to sell its 25.5-percent stake in Meralco as a single block.

"Now, the government can pool its shareholders and sell as a block," the source said, noting that the Meralco shares would not be so attractive if sold in separate tranches.

Late last year, the government had considered taking over control of Meralco at the height of the controversy over a Supreme Court ruling mandating Meralco to refund to consumers multibillion of pesos in excess charges.

The government had also said it intended to privatize certain assets, including its stake in Meralco, to help raise funds to cover the budget deficit.

The country's biggest utility company was purchased by the Lopez family from its American owners, General Public Utilities, in 1961. The family has since then reduced its stake from 100 percent to 19 percent, but the 10-percent stock ownership cap for non-Lopez groups ensured its management control of the company.

Aside from the government and the Lopez group, another key shareholder of Meralco is Union Fenosa of Spain which holds a 9-percent stake.

PLDT income expected to exceed target

By Abigail L. Ho

DOMINANT carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. is likely to exceed market expectations, with 2002 net income seen hitting more than the projected P5.6 billion.

Riding on the continued strong performance of cellular subsidiary Smart Communications Inc., PLDT president and chief executive Manuel Pangilinan yesterday said that this year would likely be an equally good year for the industry giant.

Smart and sister firm Pilipino Telephone Corp. now have a combined subscriber base of more than 9 million, after starting the year with around 8.6 million subscribers.

Pangilinan said the subscriber additions in the first two months of 2003 was "quite encouraging" as Smart and Piltel averaged around 250,000 new subscribers per month this year.

"The take-up for January and February follows the take-up trend last year. As of Feb. 24, Smart already has over 9 million subscribers. This is quite encouraging and we hope the trend will continue," he told reporters.

As of end-2002, Smart had a 45-percent share of the cellular pie while Piltel's global system for mobile communications (GSM) service had a 12-percent share.

He added that, overall, Smart had a very good 2002.

January budget deficit down 6.88% to P13.9B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT'S budget deficit in January stood at P13.948 billion, down 6.88 percent from P14.979 billion in the same period in 2002.

Although higher than the deficit of P12.1 billion in December, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the numbers were within expectations.

"This bodes well for the economy and it supports our objective of meeting our target of containing the deficit within the P202-billion ceiling this year," said the finance chief.

Government revenues. for the period amounting to P50.9 billion, although higher than the previous year's level of P47.3 billion, fell short of the P64.874 billion in expenditures.

Government borrowings during the month reached P23.5 billion, which was 50.1 percent lower than the P47.429 billion last year.

Of the total collection, the Bureau of Internal Revenue contributed P34.173 billion against a target of P37.66 billion, while the Bureau of Customs delivered P9.616 billion against a target of P7.5 billion.

The Bureau of Treasury earned P4.882 billion while fees and charges collected by other offices reached only P2.255 billion.

Last year, the BIR collected P35.037 billion; the BOC, P6.893 billion; the Treasury, P2.176 billion and other offices, P3.194 billion.

Camacho said the government had no official target yet for the month but he used as basis for comparison the monthly average of P16.8 billion. "Using the monthly average, it clearly shows that the fiscal sector is performing well," he said.

This year, the BIR and Customs must deliver P424 billion and P100.56 billion, respectively, to help keep the deficit within the target of P202 billion. Total revenues must reach P584.1 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin vowed to contain government spending within this year's program of P786.1 billion.

Boncodin admitted, in an earlier interview, that there were possibilities of higher-than-programmed expenditures but said that the budget department would implement measures to ensure that spending would not go overboard.

Among the risks are foreign exchange movements that could make foreign borrowings and interest payments more expensive, acceleration of foreign-assisted projects that normally require counterpart funding, higher contingent liabilities, and election pressures.

RFM to turn over Swift Foods to stockholders

FOOD and beverage giant RFM Corp. is set to drop Swift Foods Inc. as a subsidiary through a spin-off scheme that will transfer direct ownership and control of the poultry unit to its shareholders.

In a statement yesterday, RFM announced that its board had approved the issuance of a property dividend to its shareholders accounting for 96.44 percent of publicly listed Swift.

This means that RFM will cease to be a stockholder of Swift with the RFM shareholders assuming control, a move which analysts said would likely improve the conglomerate's earnings as Swift had been a drag on its bottom line.

RFM president and CEO Jose Concepcion III said his father, former Trade and Industry Secretary Jose Concepcion Jr., would take over as chair and CEO of Swift.

Concepcion said the strategic move would allow RFM to focus on its branded food and beverage business while allowing Swift to continue its poultry and agricultural development strategy with the full support of RFM shareholders.

He expressed confidence that with the benefit of having similar stockholders but distinct and focused management, both RFM and Swift would strengthen their competitive edge and attain dominant positions in their respective markets.

With the spin-off of Swift and the earlier sale of profitable soft drink unit Cosmos Bottling Corp., RFM is still left with selected food and beverage brands such as White King flour and cake mixes, Fiesta Spaghetti, Selecta milk and ice cream, Sunkist juices, Saucy-Mi noodles and Aqua Bottled Water.

In the case of Swift, Concepcion said his father was "in the best position to lead the organization."

The elder Concepcion, who has a degree in agriculture, is currently involved in private sector initiatives toward the development of various industrial sectors as well as in civic and regional nongovernment organizations.

"There is a tremendous potential in the new poultry business of Swift, using a more cost-efficient sourcing strategy and a targeted product-market strategy," he said.

Recently, Swift has been forced to focus on a limited market and lower its production cost by outsourcing products in order to survive cutthroat competition.

Concepcion noted that Swift had been adversely affected by the influx of low-priced chicken products, usually from countries that put minimal value on "dark-meat" chicken parts. The sector has also been battered by the surge in the cost of local corn, the main raw material for the poultry business. *Doris C. Dumlao*

'BIR on Wheels' seeks to boost tax collection

From page B1

the project are the issuance of tax identification numbers (TIN) for first-time taxpayers, tax payment, updating of one's registration with the BIR, and personal attendance to an individual's queries with regard tax payment or filing of forms.

With BIR on Wheels, the BIR also expects to encourage professionals in the entertainment industry, such as actors, actresses, emcees, broadcasters, stage directors, choreographers, and movie and television directors to register for the payment of the value-added tax (VAT).

According to data from the BIR, professionals in the entertainment industry whose aggregate gross receipts exceed or are expected to exceed P500,000 in any 12-month period are liable to pay the 10-percent VAT, while those whose aggregate gross receipt will not exceed P500,000 but will be over P100,000 are required to pay a 3-percent tax. Meanwhile, those whose aggregate gross receipts will not exceed P100,000 for a 12-month period are exempt from paying the VAT.

Aside from members of the entertainment industry, also required to pay the VAT are professional athletes, brokers—such as customs, real estate, immigration and commercial brokers—and persons engaged in the practice of a profession required to pass government examination.

The BIR said that taxpayers required to pay the VAT are given until tomorrow to register.

SM Prime 2002 profit up 11%

SM Prime Holdings Inc. has reported an unaudited net income for last year of P3.86 billion, up 11 percent from P3.48 billion in 2001. Consolidated revenues likewise increased by 12 percent.

The improvements were attributed to the good performance of SM Prime's mall and food court leasing, cinemas and amusement operations. Rent revenues went up by 12 percent amounting to P6.3 billion, up from P5.6 billion in 2001. Cinema ticket sales grew by 11 percent to P1.24 billion, against P1.12 billion in 2001. Amusement operations also contributed to this growth generating revenues of P438 million, an increase of 24 percent from P353 million in 2001.

The major contributors to the revenue improvement were SM City Sucat and SM City Davao, which opened in the latter part of 2001, and SM City Cagayan de Oro and SM City Bicutan, which started operations only last November 2002.

SM Prime now has 14 operating shopping malls in the country with a gross floor area of 2 million square meters. Cinema sales growth can be attributed to the showing of blockbuster movies such as "Harry Potter," "Lord of the Rings," "Spiderman," and "Die Another Day" last year and the success of local films during the Metro Manila Film Festival in December 2002.

Chinatrust to issue P2B in debt papers

By Elena R. Torrijos

CHINATRUST (Phils.) Commercial Bank Corp., the publicly listed local unit of Taiwan's Chinatrust Bank, plans to issue P2 billion in five-year and one-day Long Term Negotiable Certificates of Deposit to fund its growing portfolio of housing, personal and corporate loans.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Chinatrust said its board had authorized the bank management to seek the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' approval for the proposed debt issue.

"Our total consumer loan portfolio level is close to P1.2 billion and we want to increase that to P2 billion this year," Chinatrust senior vice president for treasury Roland Avante said in an interview yesterday.

The long-term certificates of deposit will have an interest rate re-priced semi-annually. The certificates will be negotiable instruments that may be sold to the general public through selling agents.

The proposed NCDs will enable Chinatrust Bank Phils. to match its long-term assets with long-term funds, Avante said.

He explained that, at present, the financial market was lacking in long-term deposits and that issuing NCDs would allow the bank to manage its interest rate exposure to mortgage loans.

At the same time, he said, the proposed NCDs were expected to be attractive to the market because they would allow investors to enjoy a better yield on their funds than regular deposits.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 26, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16	16	16	16	26,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	32.5	32.5	31.5	32	587,100
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	950
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank, Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	19,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	27	25.5	25.5	175,500
Philippine National Bank	24.5	24.5	24	24	2,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	6,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	120,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1300	1300	1300	1300	1,420
PCI Leasing & Fin., Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	250,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	945	950	940	950	490
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	9,600
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	460,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	530	530	520	520	59,830
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	120,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	285	287.5	285	285	73,230
Ivantage Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	8,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	13,000
Manila Electric Co. B	2.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	611,700
Petron Corporation	1.64	1.66	1.6	1.6	1,363,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	9900	0.99	0.99	0.99	200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	330,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.36	2.38	2.36	2.38	253,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.9	85,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	18,500
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	1,500
RFM Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	80,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	57.5	369,900
San Miguel Corp. B	65	65.5	64.5	65	279,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	220,000
Ayala Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.15	2,051,000
Alsons Cons. Res., Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	1,600,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	4,000
A. Soriano Corporation	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	80,000
ATN Holdings, Inc.	2	2.16	2	2.16	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	1,000,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	500,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.3	142,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	30,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	2,020,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.135	1,020,000
Music Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.15	0.15	250,000
Roxas Holdings, Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.93	0.93	140,000
Tanduay Holdings, Inc.	3	3	3	3	4,000
Uniwide Holdings, Inc.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	200,000
Waterfront Phils., Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,080,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.64	0.65	0.48	0.48	140,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.7	0.7	110,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	73,500
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corporation	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	320,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	1.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	120,000
Jollibee Warrants	5	15	15	15	5,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	0	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	0	10	10	10	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	0	10	10	10	1,000
WGA - Preferred	4	4	4	4	7,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	480	480	480	480	2,450
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.7	4.75	4.65	4.65	683,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	225,000,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	710,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.86	2,450,000
Highlands Prime, Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	50,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	430,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	5,096,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	160,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.22	0.22	0.2	0.2	760,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	2,000,000

MVP: I will resign . . .

From page B1

point where it should no longer be a conglomerate. It has to focus on what it knows best and these are food and telecoms," he said.

He disclosed that First Pacific had a regional food strategy that would be anchored on Indonesian noodle giant Indofood Sukses Makmur.

"I want a plan that's parallel to that on the telecom side. I already submitted a proposal on how a regional telecom strategy can be pursued. First Pacific can't adopt this without PLDT," he said.

He also discounted the possibility of the sale of a minority stake in cellular giant Smart Communications Inc.

DISCLOSURES

INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 24 with record date on March 17.

* * *

FIRST Metro Investment Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 28, 4 p.m. at Metrobank Penthouse, Metrobank Plaza, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of March 14 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

EBECOM Holdings Inc. will hold office at the 12/F Strata 100 Building, Emeral Ave., Ortigas Center starting March 1.

* * *

OMICO Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 25, 9 a.m. at the Makati Sports Club.

* * *

SPI Technologies Inc. will hold its investors' briefing on March 3, 3 p.m. at the Dasmariñas-San Lorenzo Rooms of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila, Makati City.

* * *

MABUHAY Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 9, 10 a.m. at the New World Hotel, Makati City. Record date is on March 12.

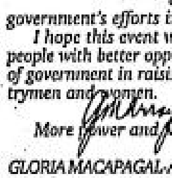
Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

Feb. 26, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.929109	1.000000	54.382000
Japan	Yen	0.007920	0.008524	0.463600
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462789	1.574400	85.619000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119136	0.128226	6.973200
Switzerland	Franc	0.684477	0.736703	40.063400
Canada	Dollar	0.622269	0.669748	36.422200
Singapore	Dollar	0.536158	0.577067	31.382100
Australia	Dollar	0.561837	0.604705	32.885100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.464611	2.652661	144.257000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247769	0.266674	14.502300
Brunei	Dollar	0.534616	0.575407	31.291800
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021775	0.023436	1.274500
UAE*	Dirham	0.252984	0.272287	14.807500
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.076300	58.531300
Argentina	Peso	0.294955	0.317460	17.264100
Brazil	Real	0.257728	0.277393	15.085200
Denmark	Kroner	0.134622	0.144894	7.879600
India	Rupee	0.019503	0.020991	1.141500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244535	0.263193	14.313000
Mexico	New Peso	0.084151	0.090572	4.925500
New Zealand *	Dollar	0.524387	0.564398	30.693100
Norway	Kroner	0.131171	0.141179	7.677600
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015992	0.017212	0.936000
South Africa	Rand	0.114875	0.123640	6.723800
Korea	Won	0.000782	0.000842	0.045800
Sweden	Kroner	0.109681	0.118050	6.419800
Syria	Pound	0.022122	0.023810	1.294800
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.026837	0.028885	1.570800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000583	0.000627	0.034100

MESSAGES



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I congratulate your enterprise for its respectable growth over the years. Your achievement bespeaks of the Filipino's creativity, industry and cooperation. It also reflects the continued dynamic spirit of the banking institutions in our country.

Your role of addressing the growing needs of our people has contributed to the creation of small and medium enterprises and helped generate jobs for the less fortunate families of our society. Indeed, your achievements along with those of other business entities, complement our government's efforts in creating a vibrant trade environment.

I hope this event will inspire all of you to continue your laudable work in providing our people with better opportunities for growth and development. May you remain active partners of government in raising the quality of life and economic well-being of our less fortunate countrymen and women.

More power and MABUHAY!

GMArroyo

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
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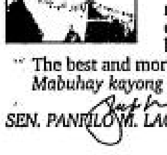

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The barometer of the soundness of an economy lies in the stability of its banking system. In a country where trust is a valuable commodity, I take pride in the fact that this institution has stood the test of time and weathered the challenges.

Longevity requires character. Character requires commitment. It is my fervent hope that the people behind Imus Rural Bank will never tire of their sworn dedication to serve the higher good. May you continually be inspired to be in the forefront and make things happen!

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Mabuhay kayong lahat!

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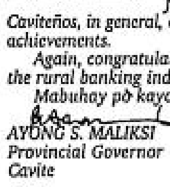

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And so it is with great pride that we salute the officials of the bank for successfully steering IRB through good and bad economic times. Caviteños, in general, and Imuseños, in particular, are immensely and truly proud of this bank's achievements.

Again, congratulations. May your tradition of excellence continue to inspire others within the rural banking industry not only within Cavite but also throughout the country.

Mabuhay po kayo!

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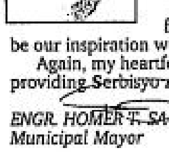

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The people of Imus has always looked up to you as the prime movers of our community's socio-economic growth. You have demonstrated your strength despite the economic crisis the whole region is experiencing now.

I, therefore, encourage you to continue soaring high despite the difficulties and challenges you are facing and let your works and success be our inspiration worthy of emulation.

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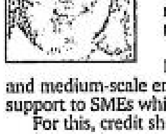

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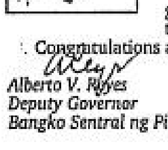

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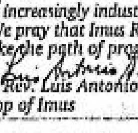

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IMUS RURAL BANK
IRB
IMUS

IRB Main

IRB Market

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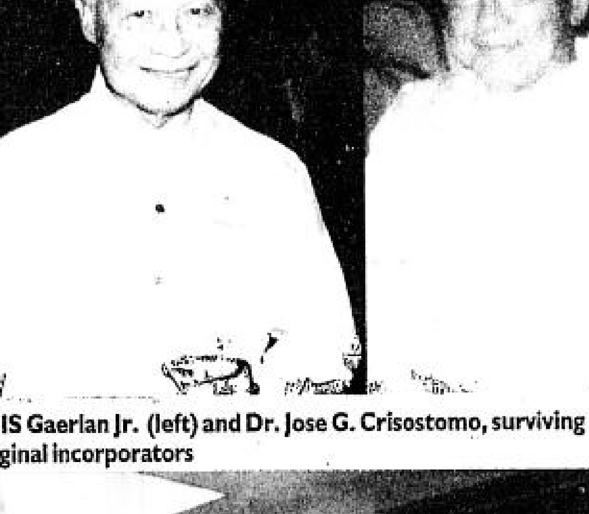
Men and women of IRB



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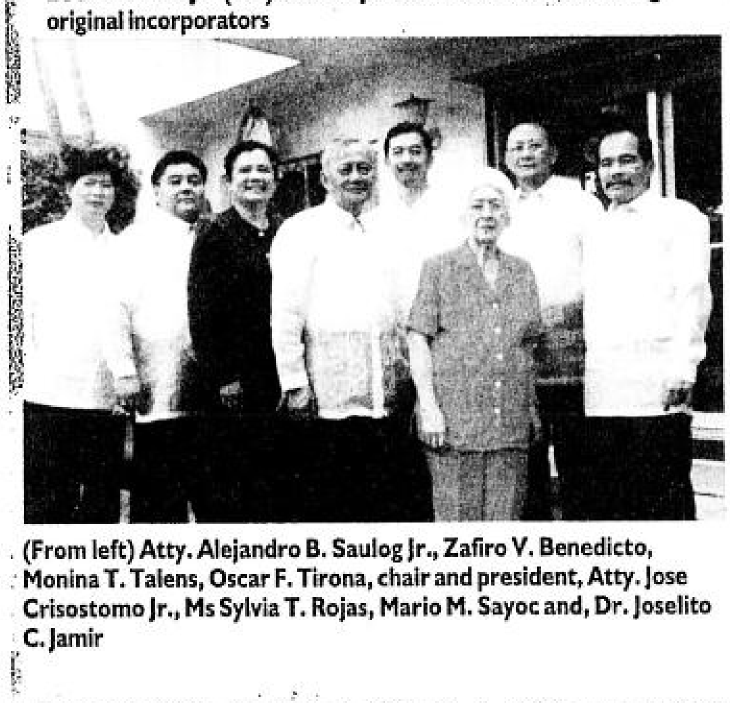

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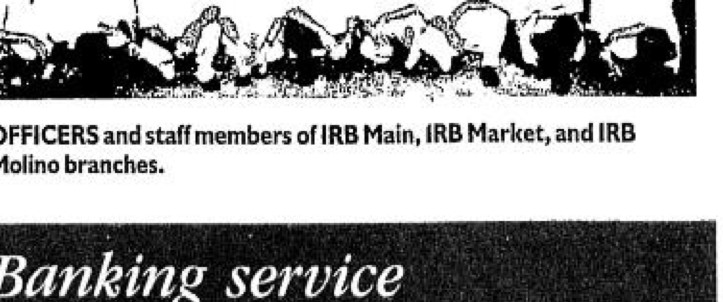

OFFICERS and staff members of IRB Main, IRB Market, and IRB Molino branches.

Getting to know th

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the person people, deposi

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two *paterfamillias*, Ciriaco Sa

nent fixture in the bank for n

his capacity as bank manage

the ultimate gentleman wit

Alejandro Saulog Sr. spent h

with the bank as its manag

untimely demise in 1985 wh

life.

Other directors who follow

Benedicto, Mr. Manuel Villa

V. Benedicto, Atty. Eugenio

Eugenio Villanueva, Atty. Su

are all descendants of the ba

Dr. Tahimik Sayoc who assu

father's retirement and was

decades, Generoso Ladores

pired term of his father, Emi

the bank insights into tax m

tensive experience with th

whose financial savvy and

brought about by his havi

mayor for nearly two decade

bank. The latter two succeed

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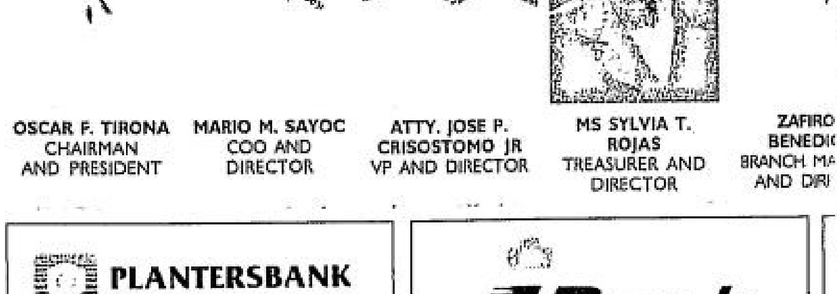
festing the king of trust and

bank has always maintained

Imus Rural Bank Board

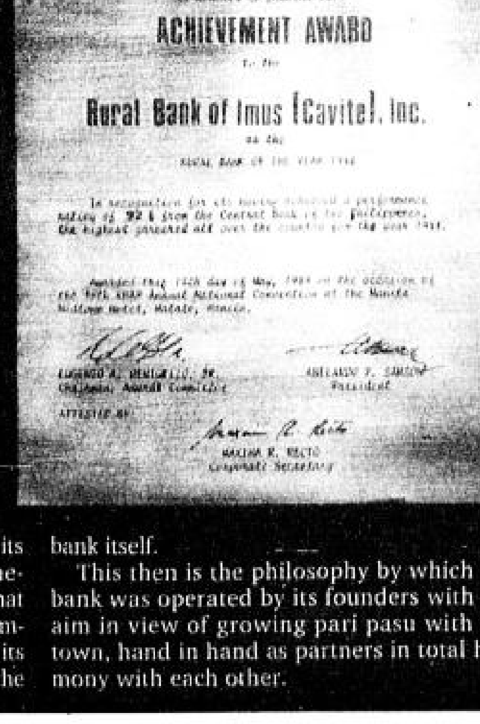


OSCAR F. TIRONA CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT	MARIO M. SAYOC COO AND DIRECTOR	ATTY. JOSE P. CRISOSTOMO JR VP AND DIRECTOR	MS SYLVIA T. ROJAS TREASURER AND DIRECTOR	ZAFIRO BENEDIC BRANCH MA AND DIR

50 Years of Rural Banking service

A GOLDEN anniversary is definitely a milestone that's worth a celebration in any language. More so if those 50 years were fruitful and productive. Imus Rural Bank, for its part, can truly claim to outstanding achievements during the last half a century of its existence. In recognition of its accomplishments in rural banking, the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines (RBAP), in its annual convention in 1989, awarded it as the most Outstanding Rural Bank in the country. But its most important claim to fame is the concern and understanding that it has always exercised with the town and its people, the role it has played in the progress and welfare of the community it serves while at the same time not sacrificing the very reason for its existence, maintaining a profitable conduit for credit in the town of Imus and its adjacent areas. Thus, it can be said that Imus Rural Bank, in its own humble way, is a prime example of the tenet that Php signifies, that is, progress and harmony in the pursuit of profit thus melding together both idealism and pragmatist in the same vein.

The bank has been instrumental in the pursuit of progress of the town not only through the extension of credit to farmers and entrepreneurs but also by conducting certain activities that would prove to be beneficial to the members of the community. Seminars on hog and poultry raising were conducted in consonance with the UP College of Agriculture. A gymnasium was constricted in order that schoolchildren may have a place to engage in sports activities in their spare time. It was this very same gymnasium that was converted temporarily as classrooms when a fire gutted the main building of the Imus Pilot Elementary School. The gym sure did came in handy during that time of disaster. In a further attempt to generate goodwill and harmony in the community, the bank had actively participated in the Operation Bayanihan taking place in the town. It was the program that was responsible for the concreting of all the streets in the town proper with the bank shouldering by itself the expenses for the Gen. E. Topacio Street aside from its earlier contributions in other projects. Dr. Eugenio Villanueva Sr., the bank president then, acted as the treasurer of the program with the bank as the depository. It is the very same role that the bank and its president will later play in the formation and operations of the Imus Community Development Council or IMCODECO which carried out livelihood programs in the town. Classes were sponsored in dressmaking, tailoring, hair styling and machine and foundry shops for men. This is the forerunner to what is now known as the Imus Vocational and Technical School (IVTS). Thus, it can be said that IRB has, in its own way, forsaken profit without really neglecting its stockholders knowing fully well that all these are but investment made with the community and growth for the community and its inhabitants will have a trickle down effect in the bank itself.



ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Rural Bank of Imus [Cavite], Inc.

This then is the philosophy by which the bank was operated by its founders with the aim in view of growing pari pasu with the town, hand in hand as partners in total harmony with each other.

PLANTERSBANK
Planters Development Bank
The Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises

LANIE DE TORRES
Manager
Imus Branch

IBank
International Exchange Bank

JESS CAMAGONG
Branch Head
IEBank-Imus Branch

METROBANK

IMUS BUSINESS CENTER
Mr. Ronald B. Ronquillo
Manager

United Coconut Planters Bank

UNIONBANK
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ms Tina Lacson Diaz
Marketing Manager, Imus Branch

BANCO FILIPINO
Savings and Mortgage Bank
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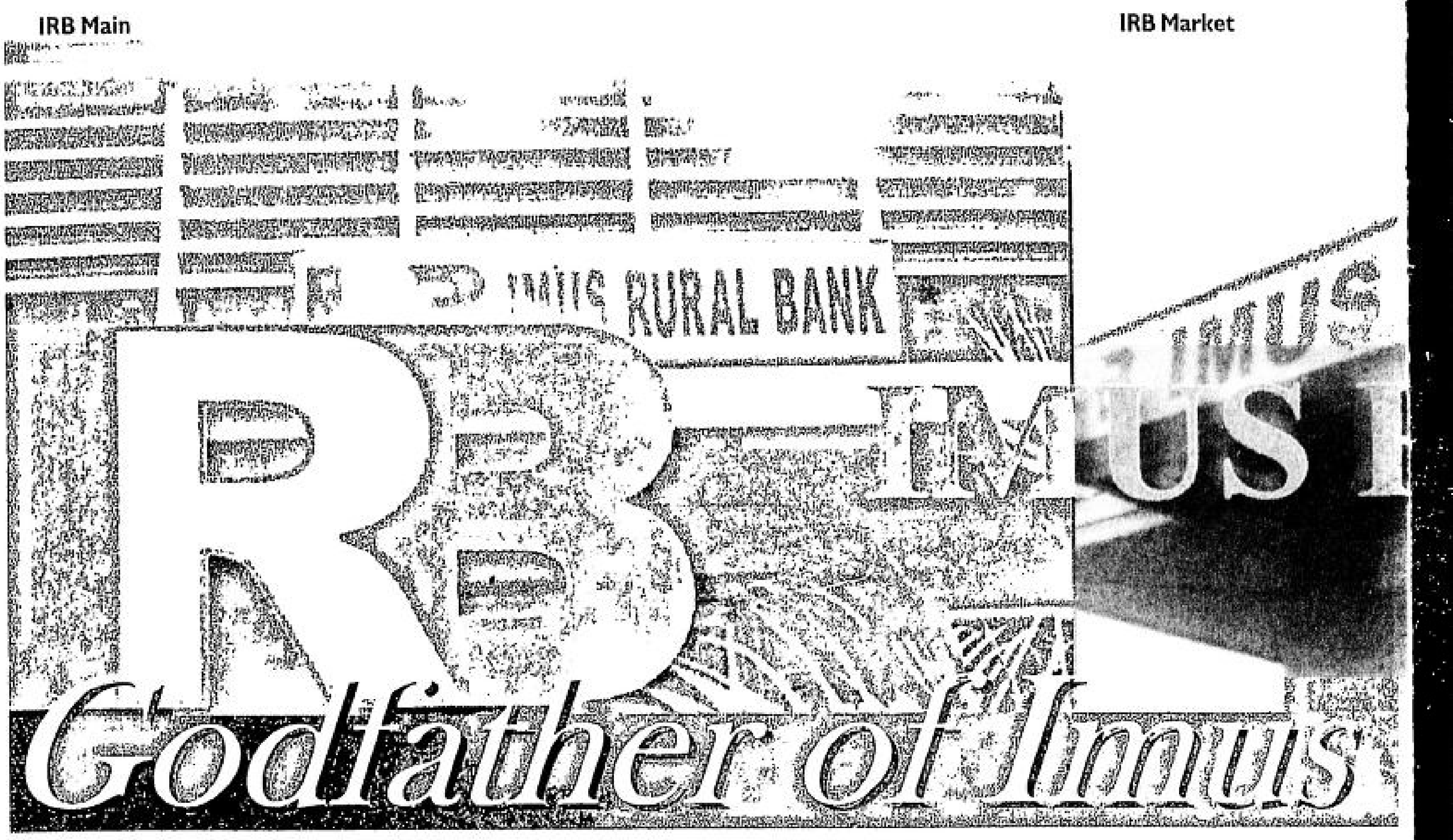

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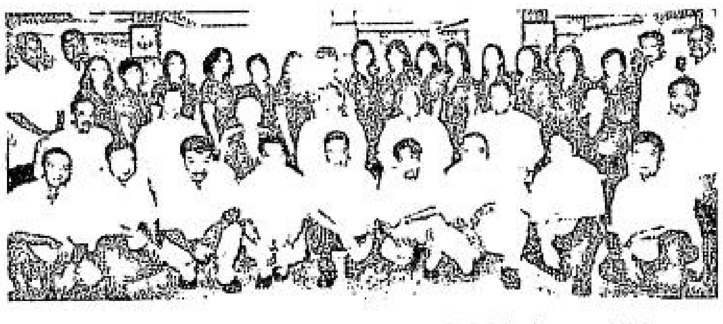

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WHILE it is the management that takes care of the day-to-day affairs of the bank and therefore answerable for the overall performance of the bank, it is the board of directors that sets the goals, objectives and general thrust of the bank. That being the case, the board lays down the policies under which the management operates and performs its functions.

Since its inception, the Imus Rural Bank has had 17 directors already. The founding directors were men of integrity, competence and stature who nurtured the bank during the critical period of its existence, its infancy and growth stages. These include Dr. Eugenio Villanueva Sr. who should have been called Mr. Imus being always part of the prime movers of such institutions like the Imus Institute, Cavite Realty Corp., Imcodeco, Operation Bayanihan as well as a host of other civic organizations. Luis Gaerlan Jr., on the other hand, was then an upcoming banker and one of the brilliant officers of Bank of America who would, in due time, become an influential voice in the national banking community through the Bankers Association of the Philippines. Dr. Jose Crisostomo Sr. was then not only a much sought after physician and president of the Cavite Medical Society but a municipal councilor as well in Imus. Atty. Severino Dominguez Sr. was still young and vibrant lawyer then out to make a name for himself both in the banking sector and civic circles. Narciso Viña was the founding director who served the bank only for a very short period. Felix Ladores replaced him after. Ladores who served the bank for

a long time was the man wh
the person people, deposi
would approach for their in
bank. Also members of the
two *paterfamillias*, Ciriaco S.
nent fixture in the bank for
his capacity as bank manage
the ultimate gentleman wi
Alejandro Saulog Sr. spent
with the bank as its manag
untimely demise in 1985 wh
life.

Other directors who follo
Benedicto, Mr. Manuel Villa
V. Benedicto, Atty. Eugenio
Eugenio Villanueva, Atty. Su
are all descendants of the b.
Dr. Tahimik Sayoc who assu
father's retirement and wa
decades, Generoso Ladores
pired term of his father, Em
the bank insights into tax m
tensive experience with th
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mayor for nearly two decad
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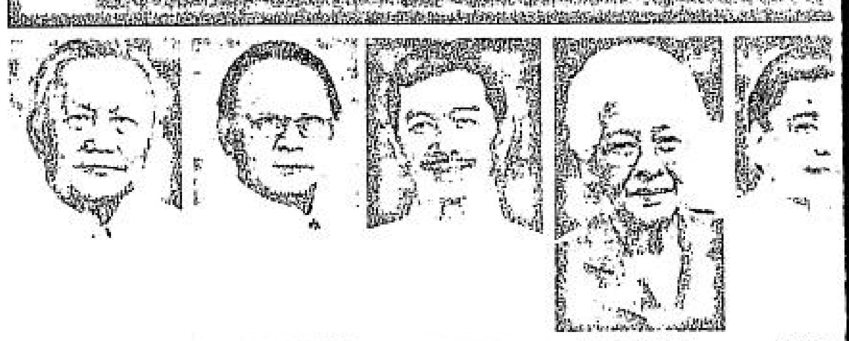
bank has always maintaine

Imus Rural Bank Boar



OSCAR F. TIRONA
CHAIRMAN
AND PRESIDENT

MARIO M. SAYOC
COO AND
DIRECTOR

ATTY. JOSE P.
CRISOSTOMO JR
VP AND DIRECTOR

MS SYLVIA T.
ROJAS
TREASURER AND
DIRECTOR

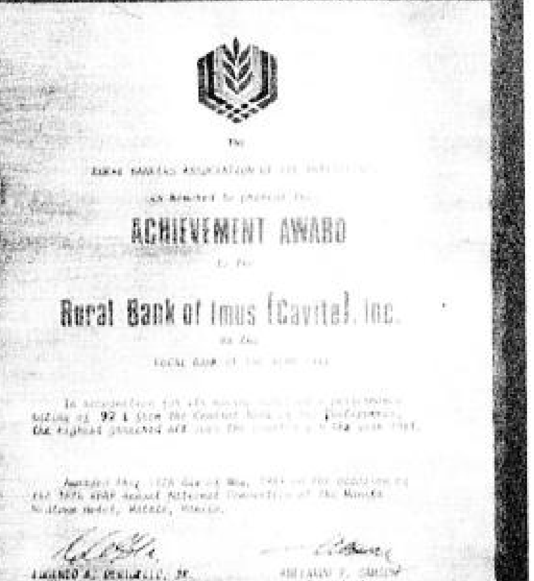
ZAFIR
BENED
BRANCH M
AND DIR

50 Years of Rural Banking service

A GOLDEN anniversary is definitely a milestone that's worth a celebration in any language. More so if those 50 years were fruitful and productive. Imus Rural Bank, for its part, can truly claim to outstanding achievements during the last half a century of its existence. In recognition of its accomplishments in rural banking, the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines (RBAP), in its annual convention in 1989, awarded it as the most Outstanding Rural Bank in the country. But its most important claim to fame is the concern and understanding that it has always exercised with the town and its people, the role it has played in the progress and welfare of the community it serves while at the same time not sacrificing the very reason for its existence, maintaining a profitable conduit for credit in the town of Imus and its adjacent areas. Thus, it can be said that Imus Rural Bank, in its own humble way, is a prime example of the tenet that Php signifies, that is, progress and harmony in the pursuit of profit thus melding together both idealism and pragmatist in the same vein.

The bank has been instrumental in the pursuit of progress of the town not only through the extension of credit to farmers and entrepreneurs but also by conducting certain activities that would prove to be beneficial to the members of the community. Seminars on hog and poultry raising were conducted in consonance with the UP College of Agriculture. A gymnasium was constructed in order that schoolchildren may have a place to engage in sports activities in their spare time. It was this very same gymnasium that was converted temporarily as classrooms when a fire gutted the main building of the Imus Pilot Elementary School. The gym sure did came in handy during that time of disaster. In a further attempt to generate goodwill and harmony in the community, the bank had actively participated in the Operation Bayanihan taking place in the town. It was the program that was responsible for the concreting of all the streets in the town proper with the bank shouldering by itself the expenses for the Gen. E. Topacio Street aside from its earlier contributions in other projects. Dr. Eugenio Villanueva Sr., the bank president then, acted as the treasurer of the program with the bank as the depository. It is the very same role that the bank and its president will later play in the formation and operations of the Imus Community Development Council or IMCODECO which carried out livelihood programs in the town. Classes were sponsored in dressmaking, tailoring, hair styling and machine and foundry shops for men. This is the forerunner to what is now known as the Imus Vocational and Technical School (IVTS). Thus, it can be said that IRB has, in its own way, forsaken profit without really neglecting its stockholders knowing fully well that all these are but investment made with the community and growth for the community and its inhabitants will have a trickle down effect in the bank itself.

This then is the philosophy by which the bank was operated by its founders with the aim in view of growing pari pasu with the town, hand in hand as partners in total harmony with each other.



ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Rural Bank of Imus (Cavite), Inc.

PLANTERSBANK
Planters Development Bank
The Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises

LANIE DE TORRES
Manager
Imus Branch

IBank
International Exchange Bank

JESS CAMAGONG
Branch Head
IEBank-Imus Branch

METROBANK

IMUS BUSINESS CENTER
Mr. Ronald B. Ronquillo
Manager

United Coconut Planters Bank

UNIONBANK
OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ms Tina Lacson Diaz
Marketing Manager, Imus Branch

BANCO FILIPINO
Savings and Mortgage Bank
Imus Branch

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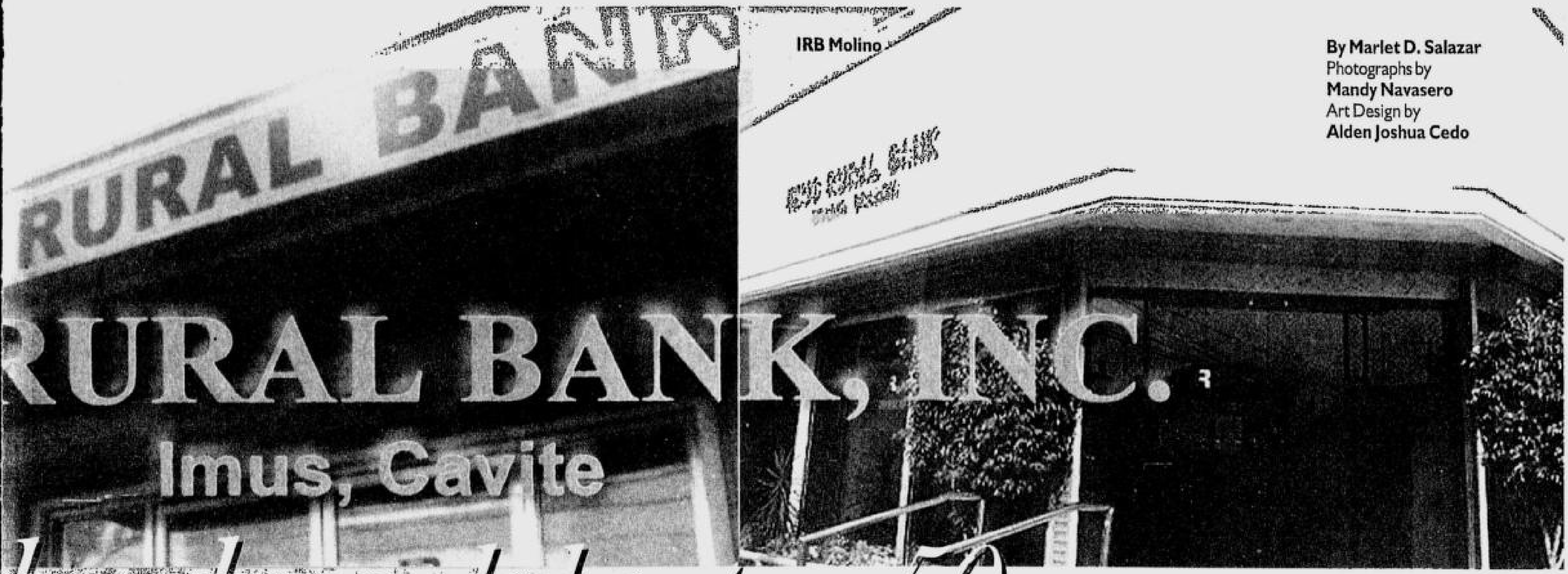


RURAL BANK, INC.
Imus, Cavite
banks celebrates 50 years

By Marlet D. Salazar
Photographs by
Mandy Navasero
Art Design by
Alden Joshua Cedo

These are not just the things that distinguish IRB from other banks. The mployees' more personal and service-oriented attitude make the bank loser to the hearts of its clients. With a total of efficient 37 staff members n its three branches, rest assured that there'll be no long lines and hours f waiting time to complete a transaction. And it's not only the locals of mus who patronize IRB, even people from nearby towns of Cavite entrust heir hard earned savings to this bank.

Character loans

Although it has become very careful in granting loans, IRB is still one f the very few banks that still grant character loans, meaning they still pprove loans based on the client's credibility.

However, the bank does not give out DOSRI accounts, simply put, hareholders are not allowed to loan from the bank. This, somehow, protected the bank from financial crisis years ago.

This rural bank has earned the respect of not only the depositors but the ther banks as well. Troubled or banks in need would run to IRB to seek ssistance. And it is only happy to lend a helping hand to its brothers in the ndustry.

IRB has consistently made it in the list of the country's top 12 rural anks. But Sayoc and company is bent on securing the No. 1 spot again n the very near future.

Although operations and transactions are simpler in rural banks compared with the commercial banks, the quality of service is never compromised. Most personnel hired are either a true blue (or what they call *taal*) aviteño or people based in Imus.

With all its achievements and earning the trust of the clients, IRB is not ven thinking of changing its status. It will remain a rural bank just as hat it is today.

e people of IRB

had the common touch,
rs, borrowers, clients
al transactions with the
unding board were the
oc who was the perma-
ore than two decades in
and Zosimo Topacio Sr.,
his favorite beret. Atty.
s most productive years
r and director until his
e still in the prime of his

ed include Mrs. Eloisa V.
ieva, Mr. Rene Antonio
illanueva Jr., Dr. Jesus
n Pearl Villanueva who
k's founding president,
ed the position upon his
he bank's treasurer for
ho served out the unex-
ano Montoya who gave
nagement due to his ex-
BIR, and Jose V. Jamir
miliarity with the area
g served as municipal
became beneficial to the
ed each other in becom-
of the bank thus mani-
vel of integrity that the

The present board is headed by Oscar Tirona who found the experiences he has gained in the private sector quite handy in running the bank. Atty. Jose Crisostomo Jr. is the bank's vice president and is a partner of the Siguion-Reyna, Montecillo & Ongsiako law offices. A UP law graduate, he was a topnotcher in the bar exam of the 1981. Atty. Alejandro Saulog Jr. is a graduate of La Salle and Ateneo and is senior partner of Saulog and De Leon Law Offices, a Makati-based firm. He acts as the corporate secretary of the bank. Mario Sayoc, an alumnus of De La Salle University and University of the East, formerly connected with the Bank of America being Luis Gaerlan Jr.'s protegee, is the current chief operating officer of the bank and a third generation member of the board. Sylvia Rojas is a second generation member of the board and has been performing quite admirable as treasurer of the bank for the past several years. John Vincent Villanueva and Zafiro Benedicto are both descendants of the grand old man of IRB. Benedicto is the current manager of the Molino branch while Villanueva is in charge of the personnel section. The other lady in the board, Monina T. Talens, is a CPA graduate from UP Diliman who had extensive experience with the Ayala Group of companies. The latest member of the board is Dr. Joselito Jamir, another graduate of UP and former assistant director for Fiscal Services of the Philippine General Hospital. Talens and Dr. Jamir are the present independent directors of the bank and form the audit committee.

of Directors & Officers

V.
TO
AGER
TOR

ATTY. ALEJANDRO B. SAULOG
DIRECTOR AND CORPORATE SECRETARY

DR. JOSELITO C. JAMIR
DIRECTOR

MS MONINA T. TALENS
DIRECTOR

JOHN VINCENT T. VILLANUEVA
HRD DIRECTOR

EXPORT AND INDUSTRY BANK
Imus Branch

EASTWESTBANK
VIOLETA CARLOS
Manager
Imus Branch

CHINABANK
Noreen S. Purificacion, Manager,
Imus Branch
Nycette O. San Diego, Business Manager
SM-Bacoor Branch

UNITED OVERSEAS BANK PHILIPPINES
A Member of the UOB Group of Singapore
We're United Behind You
ROMEO YULO
Bacoor Branch Head
JOHNIE LOPEZ
Imus Branch Head

The story behind the success

IMUS Rural Bank Inc. applied for incorporation on Sept. 23, 1952 in response to the call for increased financing in the countryside as made possible by the passage of the rural banking act of 1952. It received its incorporation papers from the Securities and Exchange Commission on Feb. 27, 1953, the date of its official foundation. It has at the start, 15 incorporators and 26 subscribers with an initial paid-up capitalization P13,900. Its founding directors were Dr. Eugenio M. Villanueva Sr., president; Zosimo Topacio Sr., Narciso Viña, Ciriaco D. Sayoc, Luis Gaerlan Jr., Dr. Jose G. Crisostomo Sr., and Atty. Severino C. Dominguez Sr. Luis Gaerlan Jr. and Dr. Jose Crisostomo are the only living founding incorporators of IRB. It was to be the second rural bank to be incorporated in the country but the first truly owned by the rice traders and the well-meaning citizens of the community. It was not only corporate in structure and character but in ownership as well. It also has the distinction of being the first rural bank in the whole province of Cavite with its first office located in a dimly-lit space inside the warehouse of the former Tagapagampon Rice Mill in Palico, Imus, Cavite.

At present, IRB, the acronym by which it is known to employee and clients alike, is now a showcase of the government's successful rural banking program. In fact, it has been fully independent of the rediscounting assistance program of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. It was made possible by the fact that the bank has, through the years, been continually increasing its capital stock in response to the increasing capital demand for credit by the agricultural sector even without any call for capital build-up from the banking authorities.

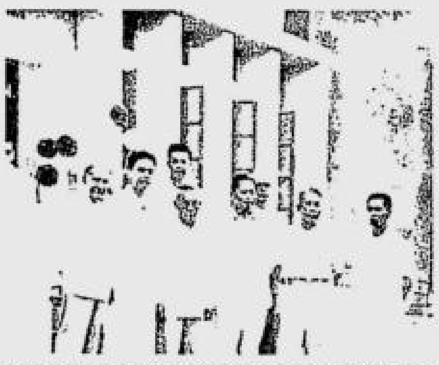
Providing assistance

Aside from its role of providing credit assistance to the people of Imus and environs, the Imus Rural Bank not only maximized profit but also remains and continues its role as a service-oriented bank. It also contributed to and became a factor in the steady progress of the town. It has financed the concreting of municipal roads, the construction of the gymnasium at the Imus Pilot Elementary School. IRB also sponsored seminars that benefited and allowed additional sources of livelihood to the people of the town through its piggery and poultry programs held jointly with the UP College of Agriculture. At present, the current board of directors cognizant of the changing demographics and economic realities in its sphere of operation fully realizes that the agricultural sector is now slowly diminishing and becoming minimalized. They are fully aware that the bank must adapt to this changing times and must refocus its thrust from the agricultural sector to the needs of the small- and medium-scale industrial entrepreneurs which should provide the engine for the economic growth not only of the municipality of Imus but of the whole country in general.

Envy of other banks

The bank has always maintained a liquid position and stability in spite of the keen competition from other financial institutions operating in Imus, Cavite. Its present deposit liability is more or less P290 million making it the envy of other thrift banks in the area. During the current financial crisis, Imus Rural Bank even had to turn back depositors because of the influx of non-traditional depositors trying to avail themselves of its higher interest rates compared to the commercial and universal banks. This is but a replay of the bank run of the 1980s in Cavite which saw the Imus Rural Bank assisting besieged banks in the area facing heavy withdrawals and the marked preference that the bank received as the new depository of funds withdrawn from other banks. This is made possible by the presence of an efficient workforce of 37 employees and staff distributed into the main office at Col. Sapinoso St. and its two branches located at the Imus Public Market and at Molino III, Bacoor, Cavite.

Looking back. . .

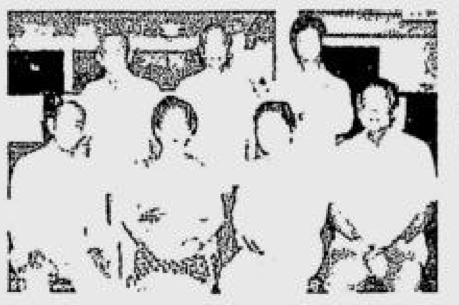


1953. THE FOUNDING INCORPORATORS (From left) Zosimo Topacio, Atty. Severino Dominguez, Ciriaco Sayoc, guest, Dr. Eugenio Villanueva, Luis Gaerlan Jr. and standing behind are Dr. Jose G. Crisostomo, and Narciso Viña.

Dr. Eugenio Villanueva, first president of IRB

1955. Rural Bankers Federation of the Philippines in the early 1950s with then President Diosdado Macapagal. Second from left is Dr. Eugenio Villanueva, then president of IRB.

1960. (Standing from left) Atty. Alejandro Saulog Sr., Atty. Severino Dominguez, Dr. Jose G. Crisostomo Sr., Felix Ladores. (Seated from left) Ciriaco Sayoc, Dr. Eugenio Villanueva and Zosimo Topacio.



1970s. Officers and members of the board. (Seated from left) Dr. Tahimik Sayoc, Sylvia Rojas, Eloisa Benedicto, and Dr. Jose G. Crisostomo. (Standing) Felix Ladores, Atty. Severino Dominguez, and Atty. Jun Saulog.

STOCKHOLDERS MEETING IN THE '80s. (Seated from left) Oscar Tirona, Dr. Tahimik Sayoc, and Dr. Deomedes Rojas. (Standing from left) Jasmin Saunar and Ulpiano Sapanghila.

1980s. (From left) Atty. Alejandro B. Saulog Jr., Engr. Oscar F. Tirona, Dr. Jose Crisostomo, Atty. Severino Dominguez, Mrs. Sylvia Rojas, Dr. Tahimik T. Sayoc, and Dr. Jesus E. Villanueva.

(Right) Atty. Severino Dominguez receiving the No. 1 Rural Bank award for the year 1988.

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PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY

Special Economic Zone Environment Management Project

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY/APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP), hereinafter called "the Government" through the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) hereinafter called "the Employer", has received from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, hereinafter referred to as "JBIC", an Official Development Assistance (ODA) Loan under Loan No. PH-P183 and intends to apply the proceeds of this loan for payments of the contract for the Special Economic Zone Environmental Project (Mactan Economic Zone) for which this Invitation for Prequalification is issued.
2. JBIC requires that prospective bidders and contractors, as well as PEZA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy on contracts funded under JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, JBIC reserve the right to:
   - (a) Reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   - (b) Loaders a contractor as ineligible to be awarded a Contract (for a period determined by JBIC), if anytime, it determines that the Contracts has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans.
3. PEZA invites interested local and foreign contractors to apply for pre-qualification and if pre-qualified, to bid for the Special Economic Zone Environmental Project (Mactan Economic Zone).

Construction Period : 365 Calendar Days
Source of Funding : JBIC Loan No. PH-P183
Tentative Starting Date : July 2003

SCOPE OF WORK

- a. New Sewerage Treatment Plant (Acrated Lagoon System, 4,700m³/day capacity).
- b. Additional Sewer Collection System (approx. 1 km. pressure line and 3.5 km. gravity line).
- c. One (1) Lift Station and One (1) Head Tank.
- d. Office and Laboratory Building
- e. Water Re-Use Facilities (1,300 m³/day)
- f. Reclaimed Water Distribution System (approx. 9.5 km).

4. The application for pre-qualificaiton is open to bona fide qualified contractor from all countries and areas, Foreign Contractor Applicants should be licensed in their own country/area and certified by their embassies/consulates in the country; and Local Contractor Applicants must be holding PCAB "AAA" License & Certificate of Registration and Classification of Contractors as Large "B" for Sewerage and Sewage and Sewage System and/or Water Treatment Plant and System.
5. In case of Joint Venture Applicant, the lead firm and member partners must satisfy the registration and classification requirements in order to meet the jointly and generally liable provision for any and all obligations, which the joint venture may incur. For Joint Ventures, the lead partners shall meet not less than forty percent (40%) of all qualifying criteria, with each of the other partners shall meet individually not less than twenty five percent of all qualifying criteria.
6. The Applicant as Prime Contractor must meet the following minimum requirement

PARTICULARS	
Average Annual Turnover for the last five (5) years:	P200 M.
Successful experience in the execution of sewerage/water treatment plant/system and/or water purification (treatment) plant/system project which capacity are more than 2,000 cu.m. per day, or at least one (1) sewerage/water treatment plant/system and/or water purification (treatment) plant/system which capacity is/are more than 4,000 cu.m. per day comparable to the proposed project within the last ten (10) years.	3 Projects
The available liquid assets, unencumbered real asset, lines of credit and other financial means must be sufficient to meet the construction cash flow for a period of four (4) months during the duration of contract.	P70 M.

7. Pre-qualification Document may be procured upon submission of the following:

   Letter of Intent, Authorization to Purchase Document, certified true copy (original copy to be presented) of the Contractor's License and Certificate of Registration and Classification (for Local Contractor) and certification as bona fide contractor by embassy/consulate (for Foreign Contractors).
8. Pre-Q document will be available for issuance starting March 06, 2003 at the PEZA-SEZEMP Office c/o BAC Secretariat, 3/F Almeda Building, Roxas Blvd. cor. San Luis St., Pasay City, upon payment of non-refundable amount of P3,000.00. The deadline for submission of accomplished Pre-qualification Documents is sealed envelope (1-original & 2-copies) shall be on March 20, 2003, not later than 5:00 p.m. at the same venue mentioned above.
9. PEZA shall notify the applicants regarding the results of the Pre-qualification evaluation on or about April 18, 2003. The plans and Bid Documents shall be issued by PEZA not later than April 18, 2003, upon payment by the pre-qualified contractor's of non-refundable amount of P30,000.00.
10. The tentative schedule of the Site Inspection and Pre-bid Conference is on May 05 and May 12, 2003, respectively. Moreover, the date of bidding shall be on June 02, 2003; wherein the dropping and opening of bids shall be held at same venue as stated above at 10:00 a.m.
11. All particulars relative to pre-qualification evaluation, bid evaluation and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of the Loan Agreement, the Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans and other applicable rules and regulation.
12. PEZA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects contained therein, and accepts the offer most advantageous to the government subject to the concurrence of JBIC.

BAC-Chairman
Philippine Economic Zone Authority

(PDI - Feb. 27 & March 6 2003)

Trans Co

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: February 10, 2003
Loan No.: EDCF PHL-3
Contract No.: Sp96.EDCFTLSE.Lms-0136

1. The **National Power Corporation (NPC)** has received a loan to be extended by the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the **Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF)** of the Republic of Korea towards the foreign exchange cost of Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Projects. NPC intend to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments unders the Contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Line Materials and Substation Equipment for various Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Expansion Projects.**
2. The National Power Corporation now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from the Republic of Korea for the Supply and Delivery of Line Materials and Substation Equipment for Various Luzon Transmission Line and Substation Expansien Projects under contract No. **Sp 96.EDCFTLSE.Lms-0136.**
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents starting **February 21, 2003** at the address given below from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

   Office of the Manager
   Bids and Contracts Management Department
   2nd Floor, Building 2, NPC-OBC
   National Power Corporation
   BIR Road corner Quezon Avenue
   Diliman, Quezon City (Zip code: 1104)
   Philippines
   TeleFax: (632) 921-2308
4. A complete set of bidding documents in *English* may be purchased by interested eligible bidders or authorized representative upon submission of a letter of intent to the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **ten thousand (Php 10,000.00) Philippine Pesos or one hundred eighty five US Dollars (US$ 185.00)** per set.
5. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount of not less than **Korean Won, one hundred twenty two (122) million** and must be delivered to the above office address on or before **April 11, 2003** at 1:30 p.m.
6. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2) sealed envelopes, one containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially, only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals which are submited by non-qualified Bidderrs or which are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals, which have been submitted by qualified bidders, will be requested for full compliance to the specification but without changing their price proposal. Bidders who do not wish to amend their technical proposal will make their bid non-complying and will be rejected.
7. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the hour and date, and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval by the Bids and Award Committee of the evaluation of the technical proposal.
8. Bids received will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend at 1:30 p.m. on **April 11, 2003**, Solarium, NPC Building Complex, Diliman, Quezon City.
9. The National Power Corporation will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation and delivery of bids.

BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

By: (Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman

(PDI - Feb. 17 21 & 27. 2003)

Cagayan Economic Zone Authority

7/F Westar Building, 611 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, 1603 Philippines
Tel. No. (632)636-5780 to 82 Fax (632)631-3997

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) is a government corporation mandated by law to supervise and manage the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport (CSEZFP) in Santa Ana, Cagayan.

CEZA hereby invites interested Consulting Firms to apply for pre-qualification and subsequently to bid, if pre-qualified for the **Consultancy Services for the Preparation of Detailed Engineering Design and Construction Management Services for the Rehabilitation and Development of Port Irene in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport.**

Interested firms must have extensive experience in the port development projects and administration of similar works.

Prospective bidders should submit a copy of their SEC and/or DTI Registration and Letter of Intent to pre-qualify and submit bid proposals to the **The PEAC Chairman**, *Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, 7/F Westar Building, 611 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, 1603 Philippines or at CEZA, Main Avenue, San Gabriel Village, Tuguegarao City.*

Pre-qualification forms shall be available from ***February 24 to March 10,2003*** for a non-refundable amount of **P2,000.00.** Five (5) copies of duly accomplished pre-qualification statements shall be submitted on or before **5:00 P.M.** of **17 March 2003.**

CEZA reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, waive any formality therein and to award the contract for the project to the bid deemed most advantageous to the Philippine Government.

(Sgd.) JOSE V. HIPOLITO
Administrator & Chief Executive Officer

February 20 & 27, 2003

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) invites all oil producers/suppliers of petroleum products to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PETROLEUM, OIL AND LUBRICANTS (POL)** for the AFP with an approved budget of Six Hundred Million Pesos (Php 600,000,000.00) chargeable against the FY 2003 AFP POL Budget.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on March 03, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. at the Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Tender Documents shall be available during office hours starting February 19, 2003 at the POL BAC Secretariat, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php 20,000.00).**

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the Tender Documents.

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three (3) separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the POL BAC Secretariat at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Submission of the envelopes shall be from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on **March 20, 2003** after which the opening of bids shall immediately follow.

The AFP reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the AFP. The AFP likewise assumes no obligation for whatever expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

For more information, please call the POL BAC Secretariat at telephone nos. 913-1175 or 911-6001 loc. 5434, or visit our website at www.logcen.com.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES · PHILIPPINES · 1987

We, the **NORTHERN LUZON ALLIANCE (NLA)**
of **Legislators of the 12th Congress**

announce with deep sorrow the passing away
of our outstanding colleague

CONG. ANTONIO M. ABAYA

(8th, 9th, 10th, 12th Congress)

of the 4th District of Isabela

who peacefully met his Creator
at 3:40 a.m., 26 February 2003.

We request the readers to join us in praying
for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at the Abaya Residence
in the City of Santiago, Isabela.
Interment will be announced later.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

FERNANDO A. ORTIZ

Who joined our Creator
in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
on February 8, 2003.

Wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards and messages of sympathy and who, in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

In Loving Memory
on the 1st Death Anniversary of our Beloved

Dr. SATURNINO B. PADUA, Jr.

1933-2002
(San Juan La Union & Norman Oklahoma)

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife Dr. Yolanda S. Padua; daughter Grace; son Saturn; daughter-in-law Alane, grandson Asher; brother Albert; sister Elsie Padua Pereña Orlando & their families.

Masses will be offered today at the following churches:

San Roque Parish de Manila	7:30am	6:30pm
Holy Family Parish (Kamias QC)	6:30am	6:30pm
Nativity Parish IVS Marikina	6:00am	6:00pm
San Roque Parish de Manila (Mar.4)	7:30am	6:00pm

In Loving Memory
on the 9th Death Anniversary of

JOVENCIO L. VALEÑA

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on February 27, 1994.

Holy Masses will be offered at 6:00 a.m. at the following churches:

St. Peter's Parish, *Calauag, Quezon*
Nuestra Señora del Rosario, *Lopez, Quezon*
San Isidro Parish, *Lopez, Quezon*
San Diego de Alcala Cathedral, *Gumaca, Quezon*
San Vicente Parish, *Gumaca, Quezon*
Immaculate Conception Parish, *Q.C.*
Society of the Divine Word, *Q.C.*
St. Benedict Convent, *Q.C.*
Parish of the Hearts of Jesus & Mary, *Q.C.*
St. Paul the Apostle Parish, *Q.C.*

Pious readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

The Board of Trustees, Management and Staff
of
AIR MATERIEL WING SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, INC.
(AMWSLAI)

express their deepest sympathies
to the family of its employee

PAUL SIMON G. DEL ROSARIO

who peacefully joined his Creator
on 19 February 2003 at the age of 27.

We join his bereaved family, relatives and friends in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Our Lady of All Nation Parish Church at Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

Interment will be on Sunday, 02 March 2003, at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City immediately after 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"In peace I shall both lie down and sleep,
for you alone, Lord make me secure..." Psalm 4:9

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

'Stop bullying us,' Starex importers tell distributor

By Tessa R. Salazar

INSTEAD of bullying small importers like us, why don't you concentrate your efforts on competing with big automotive players of Asian utility vehicles (AUVs)?" This was the reaction of Starex "gray marketers" to Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.'s claims in newspaper articles that Starex importers or gray marketers have been selling Starex vans without any warranties.

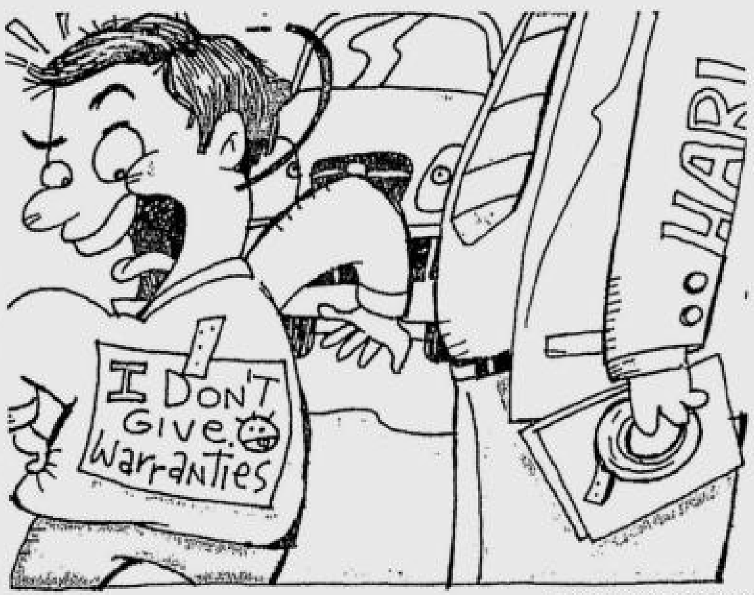

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

"Are they (Hari) saying that Filipino consumers are dumb? Who would buy a brand-new vehicle with no warranty? Buyers demand warranty and we gave them one-year warranties on parts and labor, which started 1998," said Webin Manzana, owner of Hancars Inc., a gray marketer of Starex. He added that warranties were offered, with the accompanying warranty booklets and certificates.

Independent importers

Gray marketers refer to independent importers who sell vehicles in the country such as Hyundai's Starex.

Now, gray marketers have matched Hari's warranty of three years or 100,000 km (whichever comes first), said Manzana.

"During the first quarter of 2002, Hari came out with a big ad in the newspapers saying that it offered a two-year warranty while gray marketers offered zero warranty. This is ridiculous," said Manzana.

Starex vans were introduced to the motoring public in the mid-1990s by independent Starex gray marketers. Hari (not Hyundai Automotive Resources as printed earlier here) came into the picture in 2001 as it became the official distributor of Hyundai Motor Co. of South Korea, including Starex vans.

By then, gray marketers had sold thousands of Starex vans in the country, and auto parts dealers, particularly in the famous motor lane of Banawe, were already importing spare parts for Starex vans.

The first Starexes came with a nonturbo 2600 engine. In 1998, a turbo model with 2,500-cc displacement was introduced.

Sales peak

Starex sales peaked in 1999 when its turbo intercooler engines were introduced. The Starex vans came with a P700,000 to P780,000 price tags. According to Manzana, the vans were being sold by up to 40 gray importers, including private persons who imported Starexes and sold them in their garages.

A group of gray marketers who talked to the Inquirer claim they were responsible for making Starex a success in the Philippines, stressing Hari had the business "on a silver platter." The gray marketers also claimed they were responsible for the "peripheral support" such as the availability of spare parts and accessories.

Christopher Sia, a gray marketer, argued that if Starex consumers were not satisfied with their products, his buyers would not have been loyal to him.

"Starex gray marketers are still alive and well," Manzana said, countering Hari's claims in a news report from another paper that they were now out of business.

Survivors

Some of the surviving Starex gray marketers in the country are Hancars Inc. of Manzana, CD Cars of Sia, Standout Motors of Andrew Dy and Car Options of Peter Nolasco.

"We are the reason the Starex vans are still priced at this level. We were able to bring down the price and give to our country a vehicle suited to Filipinos' tastes," said Andrew Dy of Standout Motors.

Sue for what?

Gray marketers are also wondering why Hari had intended to sue them.

"Sue us for what, for putting up business?" asked Manzana.

"They can sue us if we are selling products that are fake or imitated. But we are selling original products," added Dy.

The Starex vans of gray marketers are sourced from Starex dealers of Hyundai Motors Co. in Korea. The Starex vans of Hari, meanwhile, are sourced directly from Hyundai Motors Co. Both products are shipped into the country as completely built up vehicles.

The group's parting shot: "Hari still has to prove that it can make a Hyundai product click in the Philippine market."

INQUIRER was able to reach Hari general manager Fe Agudo but she refused to comment.

Sleeping policemen (road humps)

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

A LOT of motorists cheered when Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, concurrently Secretary of Public Works and Highways, announced he would remove illegal road humps as part of the MMDA's campaign to clear all roads of obstructions and thereby improve traffic flow.

Fernando said that road humps built without a permit and those that do not follow height standards or were built along hospitals, churches, schools and military camps are deemed illegal. Road humps that are too high damage motor vehicles, Fernando said, and even those built according to standards hinder traffic flow and delay ambulances, fire trucks and patrol cars responding to emergencies.

But those are not the only disadvantages of road humps, which are technically known as "traffic calming" vertical deflectors designed to reduce vehicle speed on streets commonly shared with pedestrians and cyclists. In Britain where road humps are sometimes called sleeping policemen or speed bumps, the government began installing humps in 1980 and by 2000, there were about 500,000 nationwide. This caused outraged Britons to organize CARM (Campaign Against Road Hump Madness) in February 1996. In the United States, victims of and objectors to humps formed Americans for Traffic Calming Reform and Rada (Road Access for Disabled Americans).

Delay and damage

How exactly do road humps victimize motorists, commuters, cyclists and nearby residents? CARM asserts that humps not only delay emergency vehicles, they inflict pain on car and bus passengers with disabilities, arthritis, back or neck problems; cause motor vehicles to use more fuel and emit more pollution; increase noise as vehicles are forced to frequently brake and then accelerate; damage exhaust systems and suspensions; create shock waves that crack buildings; cause road rage and encourage dangerous driving.

As the city council of Madison, Wisconsin noted, "Speed humps are a challenge to the daredevil, a hazard to the unsuspecting and a bothersome disruption to emergency vehicles and bicycles. Also, the city may be held liable for personal injury and vehicle damage resulting from loss of control caused by humps." (Madison vetoed road humps.)

Road humps are not that effective in slowing down traffic because some motorists have discovered that they experience less discomfort if they go over a hump at a higher speed than a lower speed. A police officer in the UK even bragged that his new Subaru Impreza patrol car could "skim" road humps at 112 km per hour. Many motorists speed up between humps to make up for lost time, while others swerve around humps, thus endangering not only other motorists, but also pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Pollution, devaluation

Road humps increase air and noise pollution. In Austria, research showed that cars negotiating a 1.6 km-long stretch of road with six humps belched out 10 times more nitrogen oxide, three times more toxic carbon monoxide and 25 percent more carbon dioxide than vehicles maintaining constant speed. In Houston, Texas, the braking and acceleration at humps increased nitrogen oxide on neighborhood streets by at least one ton every 24 hours. (Texas banned road humps on public streets.)

SLEEPING/B11

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Jianshe makes its presence felt in motorcycle market

Text and photo
by Charles E. Buban

YOU might be surprised that a new player in the country's motorcycle industry is taking its sudden rise to fame in strides, even outperforming perennial leaders of the market.

One proof is that in just less than three years after its establishment, Jianshe Motorcycle Industries Philippines last week inaugurated another plant to address a strong demand for its products.

The new three-hectare plant inside the Laguna International Industrial Park in Biñan, Laguna, will take the load from the company's Valenzuela City plant that assembles 3,000 units a month.

"This is a very significant development for the company as we aim to be in the No. 1 position by 2005," said Jimmy Ong, president of Jianshe Philippines.

MENDOZA checks out one of Jianshe's cruise models. Flanking the secretary, from left, are Ambassador Wang Chungui of the People's Republic of China; GM Cheng Yong Qiang of Chongquing North Jianshe; and Jimmy Ong, president of Jianshe Philippines.

Crucial next three years

With the first three years spent on research and development, Jianshe Philippines sets its sights, this time on expanding its business over the next three years.

In less than three years, Jianshe Philippines has already established over 600 dealers and branches nationwide, supported by another 350 service centers.

"This is crucial as we plan on expanding our sales by P100 million and be able to produce 100,000 units annually. The new plant will serve as a platform for us to achieve this goal," Ong revealed.

"We are extremely proud to have you here for this not only indicate your company's confident and bullish outlook toward the Philippines but also your willingness to help curb unemployment, especially in the countryside," said Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

"Our mother company, the Jianshe Industries (Group) Co. of China has given its full support to our operations here," announced Ong.

As one of China's major motorcycle manufacturers, it produces 1.2 million motorcycles a year exporting them to 39 countries including the Philippines.

Jianshe Industries is one of China's top 100 state-owned enterprises with a total capital of $555.7 million.

Affordable price

One of the reasons the Jianshe brand is fast becoming popular among Filipinos is its price, which is 30 percent lower than a similar make of other competing brands.

"Although very affordable, our products are comparable in terms of quality. Jianshe motorcycles passed through ISO 9001 International Quality System approval and China's National Military Industrial Product Quality System Approval," revealed Oscar Maglalang.

Here in the Philippines, Jianshe offers a full lineup of 4-stroke motorcycle products ranging from cub models to solo sports, scooters, business models and cruise motorbikes.

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Each week, a viewer's question related to cars and motoring gets answered on Auto Extreme. You can get a hard copy every Thursday in the Motoring section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

What is engine blueprinting and how will it improve my engine performance?

—Humprey Alejandro of Sta. Cruz, Laguna

MANY people think blueprinting means hand building an engine to factory specifications, but more accurately blueprinting means building your engine based on the maximum tolerances set by the designer of the engine.

When you design something, you have a blueprint for it which details the specifications for maximum performance. But mass production is never exact; still it operates within certain tolerances, plus or minus.

Blueprinting an engine means hand building an engine with perfectly fit components using maximum recommended clearances, and minimum recommended volumes. These specifications are determined using the designer's tolerances for the engine being built.

Blueprinting allows the engine builder to preinstall and test many of the engine components—including the rods, rings, pistons and crankshaft—to ensure proper fit and operation. For maximum engine performance, engine balancing is also performed. This is how the experts often get better results from the same engine compared to everybody else.

In short, it's like putting together an engine as it was envisioned on the blueprint by evening out the pluses and minuses. Engine blueprinting has become standard procedure in performance engine shops because it is seen as an absolute necessity to obtain maximum power and it ensures the longest possible engine life and reliability. Blueprinting a performance engine is a complex procedure with literally hundreds of steps, many of which require highly specialized equipment and tools. That's why the success of a blueprinted engine is a real testimony to the expertise of the engine builder.

Sleeping policemen (road humps)

From page B10

Humps increase noise pollution when vehicles, especially big ones, brake and then accelerate. At the same time, traversing the hump may cause cargo (such as bottles or cans) in the vehicle to fall or rattle, generating more noise. In some countries, drivers sound their horns to signal their annoyance whenever they go over humps, thereby disturbing people living nearby.

Car owners who live in neighborhoods with road humps (like Ayala Alabang Village, which has 6,000) are likely to have higher vehicle repair costs since repeated driving over humps, even at low speeds, will cause premature wear to suspension parts, shock absorbers, engine mounts and brakes. Keeping tires balanced and aligned will also be a problem. A low-slung car's sump and/or rear skirt can be scraped or ripped out.

If your house is located beside or near a road hump, it can devalue the market value of your property as the hump degrades the environment by causing vehicles to produce more fumes and noise. Moreover, humps generate powerful underground vibrations that can damage houses and buildings. No wonder the construction of humps within 25 meters of bridges, tunnels or underground structures is prohibited in the UK.

In Metro Manila, road humps are popular among local government officials for the kickback opportunities their construction creates. The best (or worst?) example of a public street with too many humps is Wilson Street, between Ortigas Avenue and Roosevelt Street, Greenhills. Not only are there too many humps that transform that stretch of Wilson into an obstacle course, they are too sharp and steep. Bayani Fernando should check on the legality or necessity of "sleeping policemen" on Wilson Street, which hosts the Cardinal Santos Medical Center and has no pedestrian traffic. By the way, Mr. BF, what is the legal maximum height of a road hump?

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

F3 2003 series update

ONE of the biggest things that hit the Asian motor sports scene last year was the Asian Formula 3 series. Organized by the Asian Formula 3 Corp. with Colby Ventures Inc. as Philippine events promoter, the AF3 series has delivered close wheel racing action in 2002.

With veteran and young upcoming drivers from all over Asia, the championship hunt should prove even closer than before. In conjunction with new rules for this year, teams should go head to head in what should prove to be the premier formula car class in Asia.

For 2003, the Asian Formula 3 series is back, scheduled to run 14 rounds of racing, seven events in six countries and four new venues—Japan, Korea, Thailand and Beijing, China—in addition to Malaysia and the Philippines. Top drivers and teams from all over Asia will battle it out for the top spot on the podium.

With support from the likes of Shell, Denso, Castrol, Petron and Yokohama, our Filipino teams and drivers should have more than a fighting chance on garnering great results in the coming races.

AF3 will be featured in the six events of the Asian Festival of Speed (Afos). There will be a stand-alone event held at the Subic International Raceway (event date to be announced), making a total of 14 races in seven event dates.

For more information about the Asian Formula 3 Series, log on to www.ASIAN F3.net

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GMA should act on traffic now

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza

THE GREATEST effort to decongest Metro Manila's monstrous traffic jams should come from GMA herself. As President of the republic, she should treat this malady seriously. She can't afford to talk of other priorities without giving her attention to traffic.

Or is it because she doesn't suffer from the inconveniences of traffic snarls that's why she doesn't give a damn about it?

I still distinctly remember what Imee Marcos said when asked what was the best thing about being the daughter of the President of the Philippines: "I encounter no traffic jams of any kind."

Or words to that effect.

* * *

I think GMA has lost track of what's happening right on her own turf. She talks of supporting George W. Bush with gusto almost all the time, but she seems to treat the traffic concern as a nonissue.

For the President's information, traffic jams in the metropolis cost the country billions of pesos in wasted time, energy and fuel. One gridlock alone would amount to thousands of pesos gone up in smoke, literally, as vehicles caught in the jam have their engines purring while drivers wait for the police to untangle the mess—if the police would come at all.

If there's one proof of how this country is being mismanaged (again), it's traffic. Oh, well, I'm not as surprised as before anymore. The place where I live is a virtual stone's throw from the La Mesa Dam, the country's biggest water reservoir. And yet, water hardly drips from our faucet. And this is Metro Manila. In my hometown of Mangatarem, Pangasinan, water flows freely from the faucets. In Calauag, Quezon, Sol Juvida's birthplace, water is serviced by Nawasa 24 hours a day. How come that is not the case in Manila, the so-called seat of hi-tech and all?

* * *

If there's one big plus our commuters are enjoying right now, it's the Metro Tren plying the Monumento to Baclaran route. Friends of mine who use this line are always profuse in praise over the efficiency of its operations.

When was it built? It began during the time of FVR and was fully operational under Erap's term?

You see, there's always the good side and the bad side of every person. The Metro Tren is one of the good sides of FVR, or Erap?

* * *

During the first days of the implementation of the color coding on public utility vehicles, there was a marked improvement of traffic flow in Edsa. If that was so, why don't we adopt it permanently?

But consider this: It was truly successful because I saw a lot of traffic enforcers enforcing the new ruling on PUVs. Several days later, many of the traffic cops were gone.

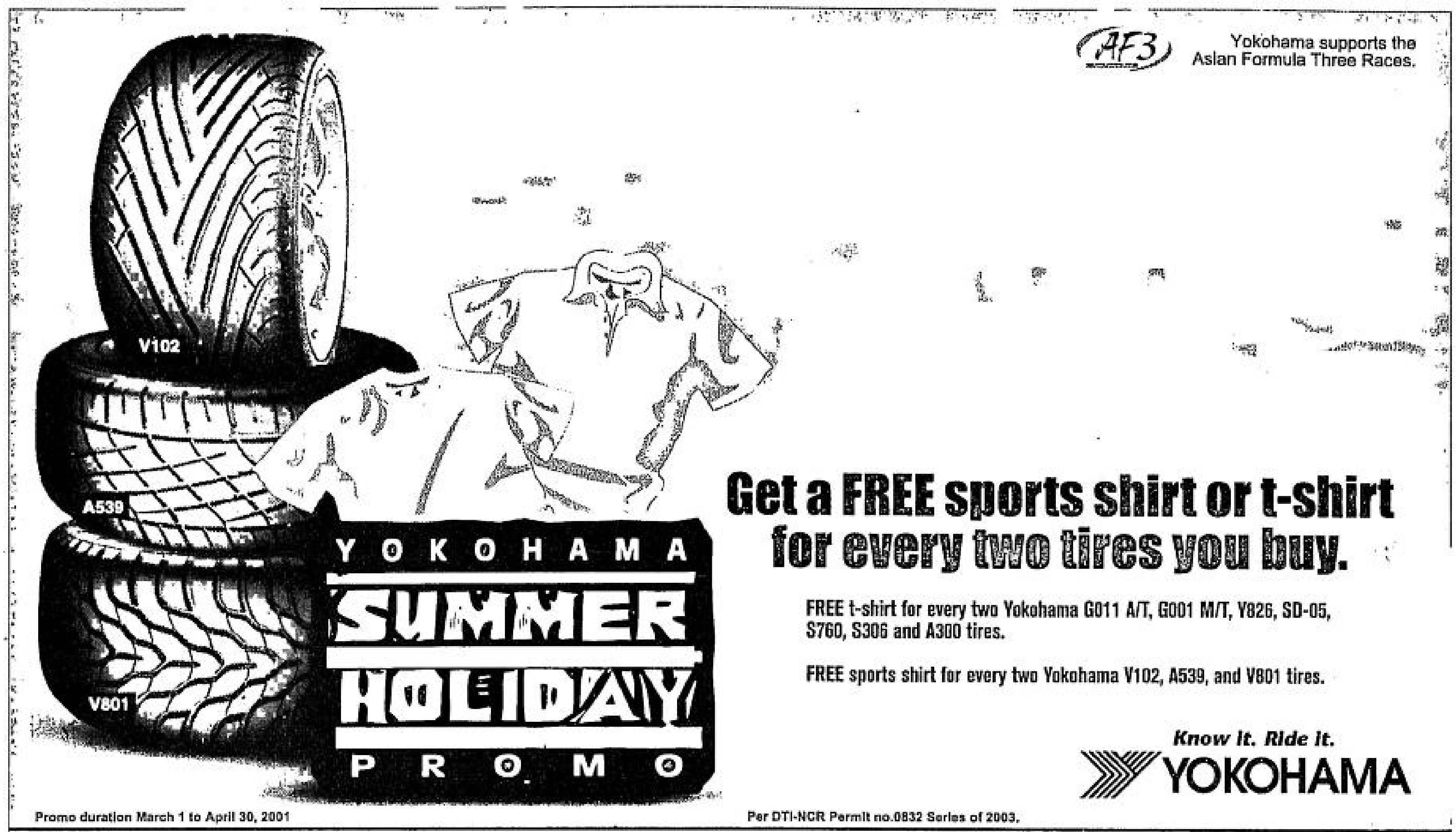
As I keep saying, new policies will only have lasting efficacy if the enforcers will only drop the *ningas cogon* attitude.

* * *

I wish the Honda entourage bound for Melbourne for the Formula One the best of the best. To Arnel and the Arnel's Angels—Tin Tin, Min and Dansel—my felicitations. I hope you won't suffer from migraines for baby-sitting my colleagues from the media during this breakthrough journey. I wish I could join you in the future.

* * *

My deepest condolences to the loved ones left behind by Kuya Junior Garcia, among them Atchie Elsa, Atchie Perla, Susil Tia Nena and Larry. Kuya Junior, a dear, dear friend of my Insan Boying Estrada, passed away last Saturday after a heart attack. Kuya Junior, the son of the late Tio Upong "Mr. Cigar" Garcia, was one of the gentlest persons I've ever known. His brother, Tom, now a successful businessman based in Cagayan de Oro, is also a dear, dear buddy of mine. Before I flew here to Davao last Friday, Feb. 21 for the PAL Interclub Golf Championship (I am still here, buddies), I had a drink with Kuya Junior at the Kamayan West in Quezon City. Occasion was the despedida for Kanor, a mentor in the good old days. I didn't know that was the last night that I would see Kuya Junior alive. Our "bottlemate" Boni Sison sent me a text message on Tuesday to say Kuya Junior's remains would be laid to rest at the Mangatarem Catholic Cemetery on Sunday, March 2. Please say a prayer for the eternal peace of Kuya Junior's soul.



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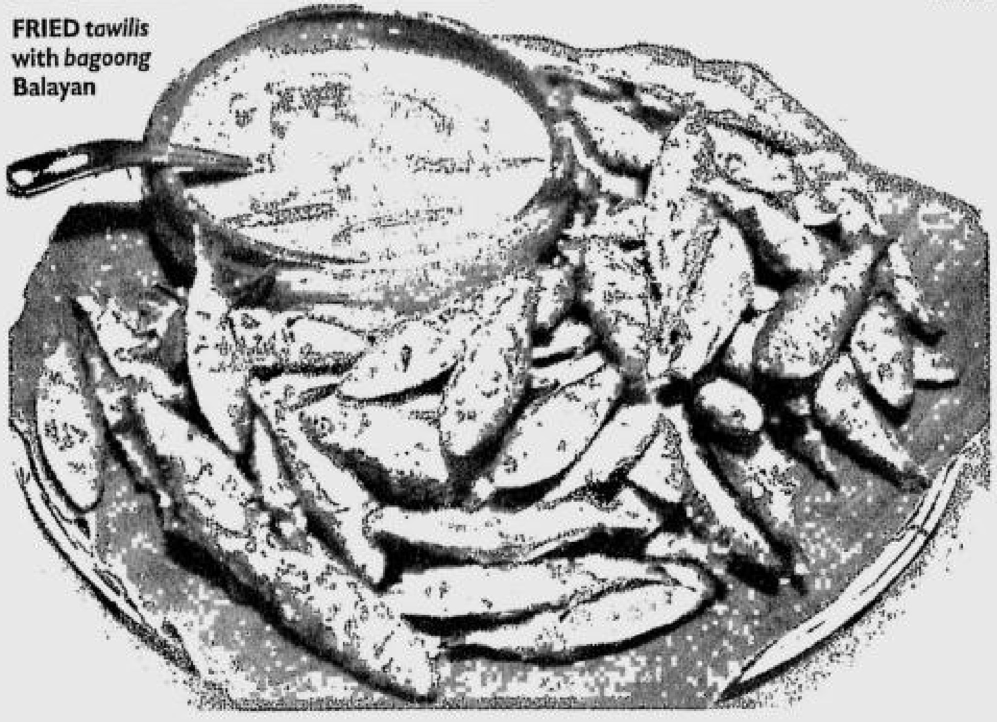

FRIED *tawilis* with *bagoong* Balayan

Way to perfect dining is through Batangas

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Betoy Johnson

"YOU can never go wrong with Via Mare, which is by now an institution."

The words revealed the trust and confidence of the management of the posh Canyon Woods Residential Resort Club in Batangas in the Via Mare restaurant chain, which had been tapped to supply the resort's food and beverage requirements.

"You may have the best resort in the world, but if the food is not good enough, your resort is as good as gone," said Tony Villa-Real, director of Canyon Woods last Saturday when the media previewed Via Mare's culinary offering to the resorts guests and members.

"The best way to run a resort is to have a good selection of food created by respectable culinary experts."

For that reason Canyon Woods turned to Glenda Rosales Barretto,

WAY/ C2

For the first time, Via Mare's Glenda Barretto will run the food and beverage department of a resort

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Asian Meals in Box: Mar. 8 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Drunken Chicken, Beef Tenderloin with Leeks, Crispy Golden Porkchop, Spareribs with Sweet and Spicy Sauce, Clams in Yellow Sauce, Deep-fried Fish with Black Sesame Seeds, Garlic Spinach in Oyster Sauce, Asparagus Mushroom in Ginger Sauce. Special Feature: Basic sauces for rice or noodle meal flavored rice by Chef Sita Ram. Free consultation on how to start a rice in a box business. P1,000.

OTHER ONE-DAY SPECIALS
Bakery & Bakeshop: Mar. 1 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Commercial methods used in preparing breads, pies and cakes including costing, production batching with actual hands-on. P1,500
Japanese Cooking: Mar. 1 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Miso Soup, Mixed Tempura, Sukiyaki, Kamameshi; assorted Sushi: Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki and Nigiri. P800
Cocktail Treats: Mar. 8 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Pinalutong na Kangkong, Crispy Dilis, Ukoy, Sizzling Fish Sisig, Pinaputok na Talaba, Chicken Feet. P600.
Catering: Mar. 15 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Portion Control, Costing, Inventory, Table Layout & Equipment Sourcing with actual preparation of popular catering dishes: Morcon, Galantina, Pork Asado, Soy Chicken, Roast Pork, Baked Macaroni, All Meat Paella and special dessert. P1,500.
Gulaman Delights: Mar. 15 (Sat) 4:30 - 6 p.m. Cathedral Window, Fruity Chewy Salad, 24-hour Salad, Buko-Pandan, Almond Jelly, Crema de Fruta with food styling presentation. P500.
Bake & Sell Snacks: Mar. 15 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Two kinds of Empanada (fried & baked), Garlic Beef Muffins, Chicken Tart, Sausage Pie, Mini Calzone, Stuffed Pizza. P700.
Asian Curry & Breads: Mar. 22 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Makhani Chicken Curry, Vegetable Karma Curry, Seafood in Red and Green Curry, Beef Curry. Special Breads: Chapathi, Paraha by Chef Sita Ram. P800.
Kakanin: Mar. 22 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Puto, Cuchinta, Bibingka, Malagkit at Cassava, Pichi-Pichi. Special Feature: Maya Tamales and Bibingka. Bonus: Salabat. P750.
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Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking) For Career Cooks: Mar. 4 - 7 or 18 - 21 (T - F) 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Coverage: Standard techniques of preparing basic stocks, soups and sauces applicable to 1001 recipes; salads & dressings; main dishes; potato cookery; pasta and rice; techniques of deboning and filleting of fish and chicken; use of herbs and spices to cooking; basic garnish for plate and platter presentation. Free lunch. P3,000.
Baking I (Basic): Mar. 5 - 7 or 19 - 21 (W - F) 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. Techniques in preparing basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and more. P2,000
Cooking I (Basic) For Messmen, Stewards and Beginners: Mar. 11 - 14 or 25 - 28 (T - F) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. Basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes; Techniques of deboning chicken and fish; Basic garnishing; Actual preparation of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes. P2,500

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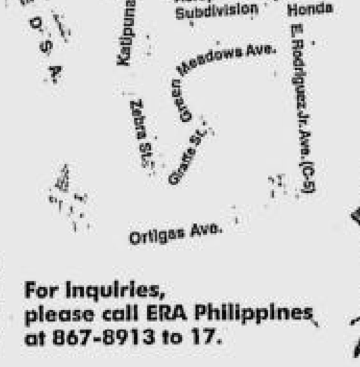

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Way to perfect dining is through Batangas

From page C1

the doyenne of Philippine cuisine and the driving force behind Via Mare. With her commitment to excellence, Canyon Woods expects her to create a near-perfect dining milieu in the resort.

This is actually the first time Barretto's Via Mare has accepted an offer to run the food and beverage department of a resort. It took her quite awhile to say yes because she was worried she would have too many bosses.

"Luckily, the people I work with now are nice and supportive and they truly trust me," said Barretto, who has catered for some of the most important events in the country.

For her new venture, the Canyon Woods group has given Barretto some leeway to innovate and put some twists on the resort's menu.

Local delicacies

"I am now in the process of exploring Batangas' delicacies, such as *tawilis, maya-maya, tulingan* and *bulalo* , to see what I can do to improve them or at least make their presentation more exciting," she said.

Barretto added that one of the advantages of running the kitchen of Canyon Woods was she could get her ingredients fresh and cheap, from seafood and meat to vegetables and fruits. "I have all the ingredients I need here, [including those that] I can never get fresh in Manila like *tawilis* and *maya-maya*."

The Canyon Woods project is another feather in the cap of Barretto's Via Mare, which started as a simple seafood restaurant in 1975 before it became a big-time catering service preparing banquets for visiting heads of state, performing artists and celebrities. Via Mare, Latin for "by way of the sea," has also represented the country in food festivals abroad.

A few years back, it went into the home meal replacement (HMR) business with Redi-Feast, a line of ready-to-eat Via Mare dishes, such as the well-loved Kare-Kare, Sugpo sa Gata and Callos, in convenient food-grade paperboard boxes.

Sneak preview

The media group was welcomed with a cold, refreshing *buko* drink with a hint of *calamansi*. For appetizer, Barretto's signature *okoy*, with finely julienned *camote* strips, was served complete with *sawsawan* of vinegar, garlic, shallots and soy sauce.

Laid out on the buffet table were *lechon de leche* stuffed with *paella*, *ginataang langka*, steamed *okra*, *sitaw* and *talong*, fried *tawilis* with vinegar sauce, and chili crabs. Dessert consisted of *lumpiang tikoy* with candied *kundol* and sesame seeds and native *kakanin*.

Aside from these items, Canyon Woods can expect Barretto's other signature dishes, such as *humba, binagoongang baboy* served with crisp *lechon kawali* and *bagnet*; her innovative native salad bar, with *kangkong, puso ng saging*, mushrooms, beans, etc., and such dressings as *bagoong alamang, suka't bawang*, coconut milk, etc.

The new menu will have both Asian and Western dishes as well as items for kids, like burgers, hotdogs, French fries and pizzas. Hearty soups and a wide variety of entrées, as well as different sandwiches will also be served. Every now and then, diners can expect special promotions.

With the resort's management, led by president and CEO Georgo Go, Barreto is plotting a vegetable garden within the resort from where she can get get a steady and fresh supply of all the herbs and spices she needs for the club.

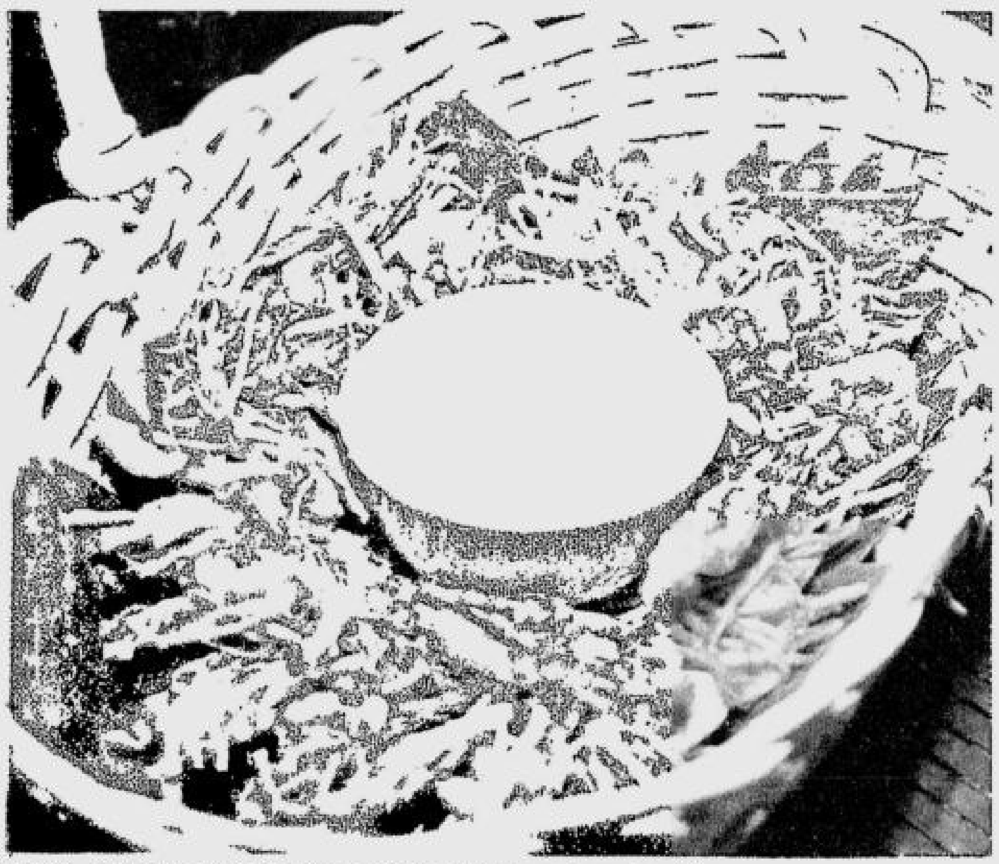
Canyon Woods in Laurel, Batangas, is an hour-and-a-half's drive from Manila. Despite the word "resort" in its name, it is actually a multi-product residential subdivision complemented by resort facilities and activities.

A formal dining room in the clubhouse that seats 300 people is suitable for weddings, banquets, events and corporate functions. The 280-seat coffee shop on the ground floor is ideal for leisurely meals and snacks.

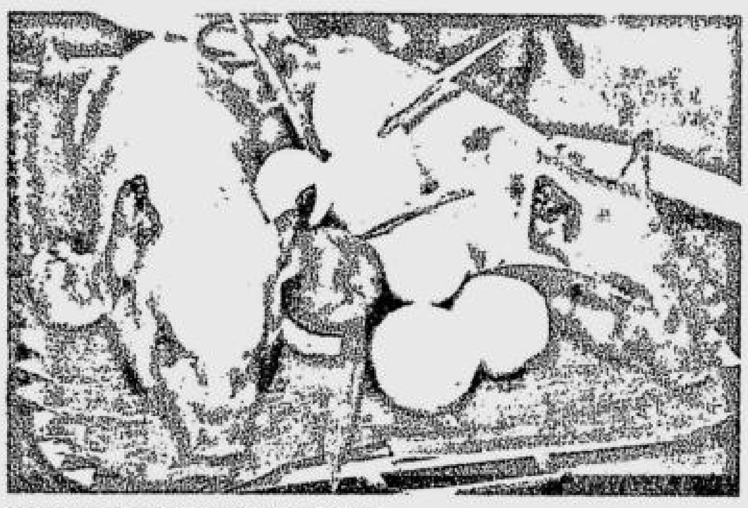
With Via Mare having taken over the resort's kitchens, members and their guests can look forward to coming out of the woods into definitely more delicious times.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

GLENDA Barretto brings her culinary expertise to Canyon Woods Residential Resort Club.

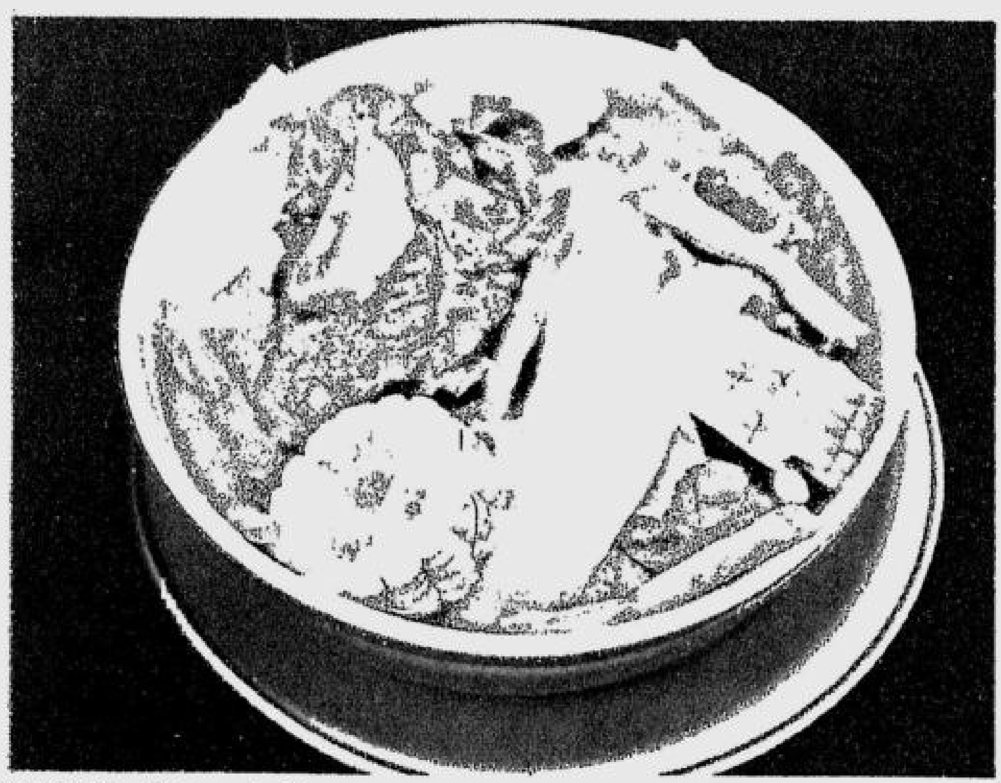


OKOY—crispy deep-fried shrimps with finely julienned *camote* strips



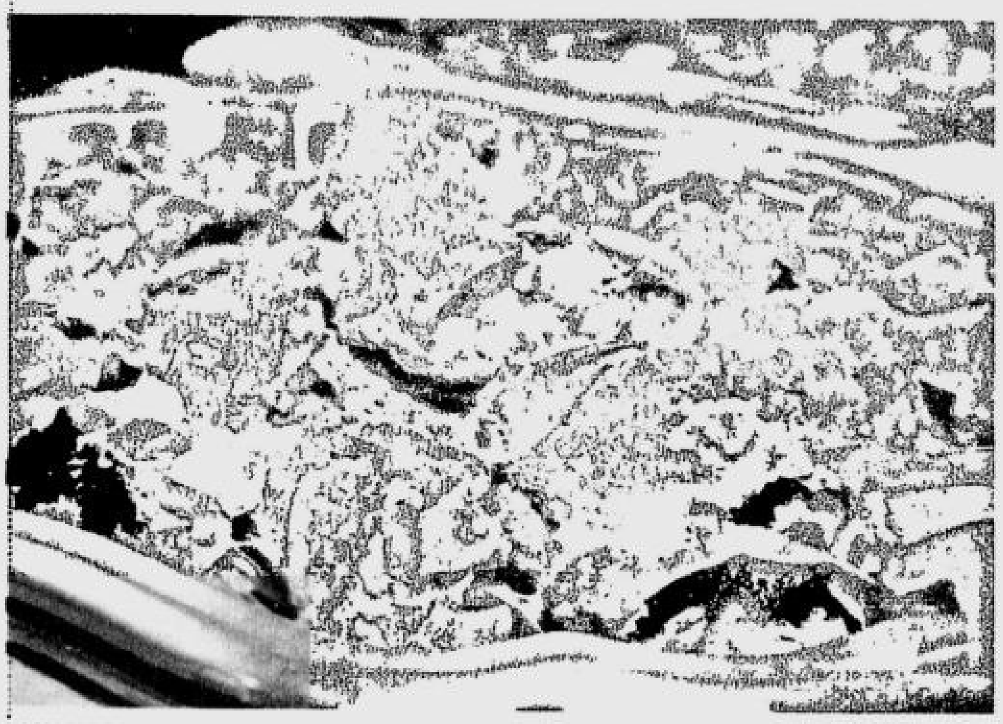
LECHON *de leche* stuffed with paella

SPICY shrimps

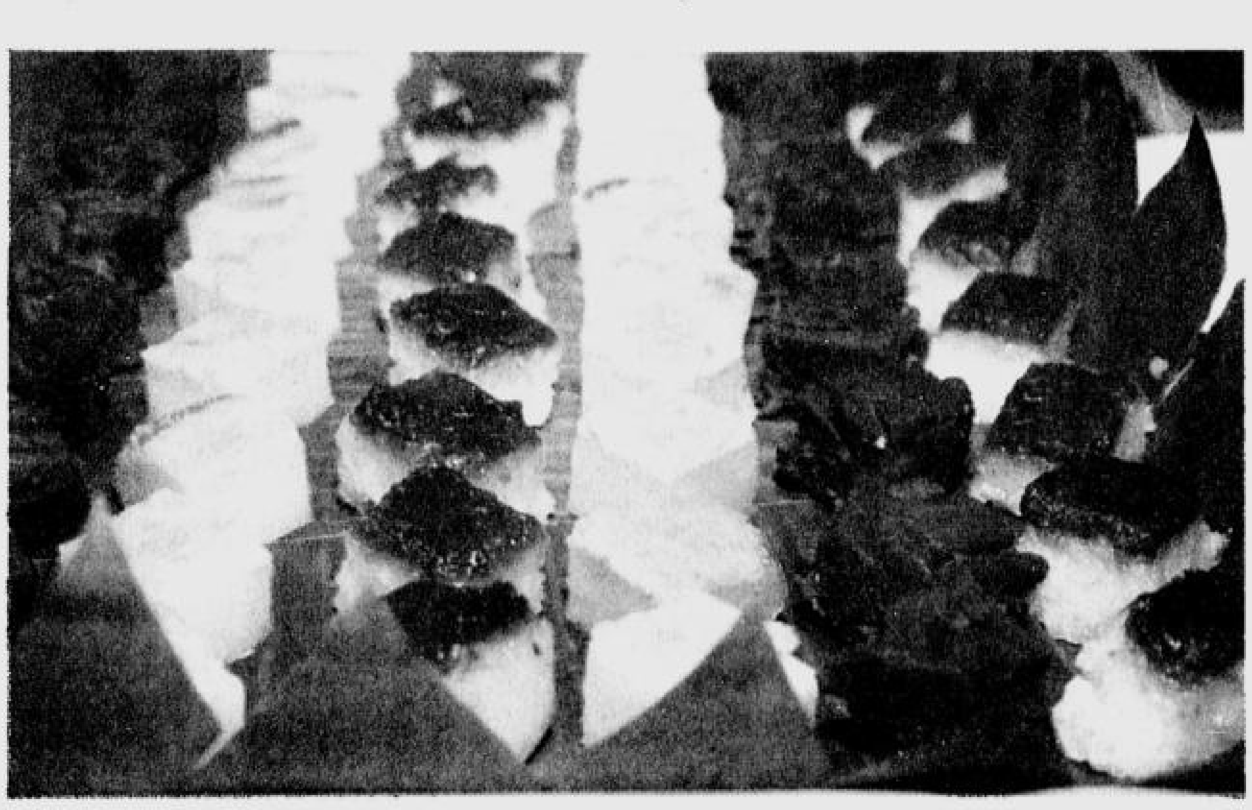


STEAMY hot Batangas *bulalo*

GINATAANG *langka*



ALIMANGO *sa gata*



ASSORTED native *kakanin*

Courageous cook

THE JOYFUL Cook stared at her oversupply of organic bean sprouts. Enthusiasm got the better of her when she discovered all her favorites from movable organic markets at a big supermarket in Metro Manila. She made it back to Cavite just in time to cook dinner.

"Let me pull out the recipes of Maria Orosa. If there's a woman who knows what to do with sprouts, it's that most outstanding of World War II heroines," TJC announced.

Trailblazing food science

She got the 1998 reprint of "The Recipes of Maria Y. Orosa with Essays on Her Life and Works," a loving tribute compiled and edited by younger sister Helen Orosa del Rosario, originally published in 1970.

"Did you know that Miss Orosa was the first to freeze mangoes? And at a time when freezing was still unrecognized as a form of food preservation," Saint Sandok said. "She ran away from a comfortable home and her strait-laced mother, stowed away on a steamer bound for the USA where she washed dishes and scrubbed floors in exchange for her passage, and then worked her way to become the country's pioneering pharmaceutical chemist. What a woman! Her life should be made into a movie to inspire young women around the world.

"Having earned her masters in 1919, she was made Washington's assistant state chemist the next year. But she decided to serve her people by returning home in 1922."

Orosa organized the Food Preservation Division for the Philippines' Bureau of Science. She received a 1926 government grant to observe canneries in the United States, China and Japan. Her work eventually transformed the agency into the Plant Utilization Division of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

"Banana catsup, seaweed agar (*gulaman*), guava jelly, pineapple vinegar, *duhat* wine, *calamansi* concentrate, and many commercial uses for coconut and cassava flour began with Miss Orosa's scientific experiments at her laboratory in San Andres, Manila," Sandok said. "She lived at a time when Filipinos were proud of their scholarship and their unique tropical bounty. It was a matter of honor for many academically trained Filipinos in those days to make the homeland stable, its graduates outstanding, and the country worthy of America's recognition that its people could and should govern themselves as an independent republic."

Food security

"I admire Miss Orosa for setting up 4H clubs like the ones she saw in America. They were rural improvement groups that emphasized the value of health, heart, head, hand. By 1924, the (clubs had) 22,000 members. She later founded the Home Extension Service through which hundreds of demonstrators she trained taught barrio women homemaking, child care, meal planning, food preservation, nutrition and poultry-raising," TJC said.

"Miss Orosa was passionate when she wrote: 'A war is going on, surpassing in terror and cruelty all others that have gone before it. Half of the world is starving. Yet we are seemingly indifferent and unconcerned about the catastrophe that may befall us at any moment.... The right kind and amount of food taken in by every citizen will mean not only strong vigorous bodies with steady nerves but bodies resistant to diseases. Sickly, undernourished individuals are a liability to the country. They constitute a burden to the community. They need care and medical attention and food. Yet they produce neither food nor work.

'Our defense program can only be complete if it includes the building up of the health of our citizens.... Knowing what foods we need to keep healthy and well, we should eat accordingly well-balanced meals. We should increase our food supply by growing food plants in every available space on our home lots. And we should learn methods to preserve foods, storing the excess in time of plenty, against a future of necessity.'"

"During the Japanese Occupation, she smuggled her magic powder—protein-rich soybean flour—inside bamboo tubes disguised as carpentry supplies for concentration camps where pro-democracy supporters were detained. She was a member of Marking's Guerillas, an underground movement, and refused to leave her post at the laboratory despite raids by the *kempetai* who threatened to kill her," Sandok said poignantly, remembering how TJC's aunt—his former owner—dealt with similar harassment when she refused at first to let the Japanese convert her ancestral home into their officers' barracks. "Miss Orosa died on Feb. 13, 1945, when shrapnel hit her heart during a bombing raid in the Liberation of Manila."

Waste not, want not

"She was so admirable. I appreciated her frugality and advocacy of recycling even before it became popular," TJC added. "She turned the by-products of *nata de piña* into vinegar and soybean curd into flour. She turned the *palayok* into a *kalan*-top oven, propagated the Roselle plant with its cranberry-like juice, showed women how to preserve surplus fruits and vegetables so nothing went to waste. She shared so many recipes for using common and abundant *buko*, rice bran, peanut and *alugbati* so one would not tire of eating them, and she also promoted innovative uses for rice and corn to counter starvation and malnutrition.

"It's the ideas of not wasting food and of being proud to grow one's food that are so important. Today, most of us buy food and produce without really knowing how to farm. We want the cost of food to go down even beyond affordable, often forgetting that the farmer and his family need our help to survive. But wait, I need a recipe quick. Here's an easy one. Stuff roasted eggplants with soybean, shrimp, onion and garlic; coat with egg white and then rice bran before frying."

"Just substitute bread crumbs for the bran," Sandok advised as he looked forward to a simple, candid tribute to a great Filipina whose contributions to the nation should never be forgotten.

Next: Feasts of seasons

THE JOYFUL COOK

Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

A World War II heroine also pioneered some food preservation techniques in the country

Experience Ilonggo cooking

IF YOU want to experience Iloilo but do not have the time to spare, drop by Café Lupe in Guadalupe, Makati City, to satisfy your Ilonggo cravings.

Enjoy Ilonggo cuisine in lunch and dinner buffets on March 1-2. Savor such dishes as *Kadios, Batchoy*, and *Inasal*. Or you can try doing them yourself.

Chef Tony shares some Ilonggo recipes with a Café Lupe twist.

Laswa (Ilonggo's Favorite)

2 tbsp vegetable oil
15 g chopped garlic
15 g chopped onions
100 g shelled shrimp
50 g *kalabasa*, peeled and cut into wedges
30 g *okra*, halved
20 g *patola*, peeled and cut into wedges
20 g green *papaya*, peeled and cut into wedges
1 liter soup stock
10 g *saluyot*
salt and pepper to taste

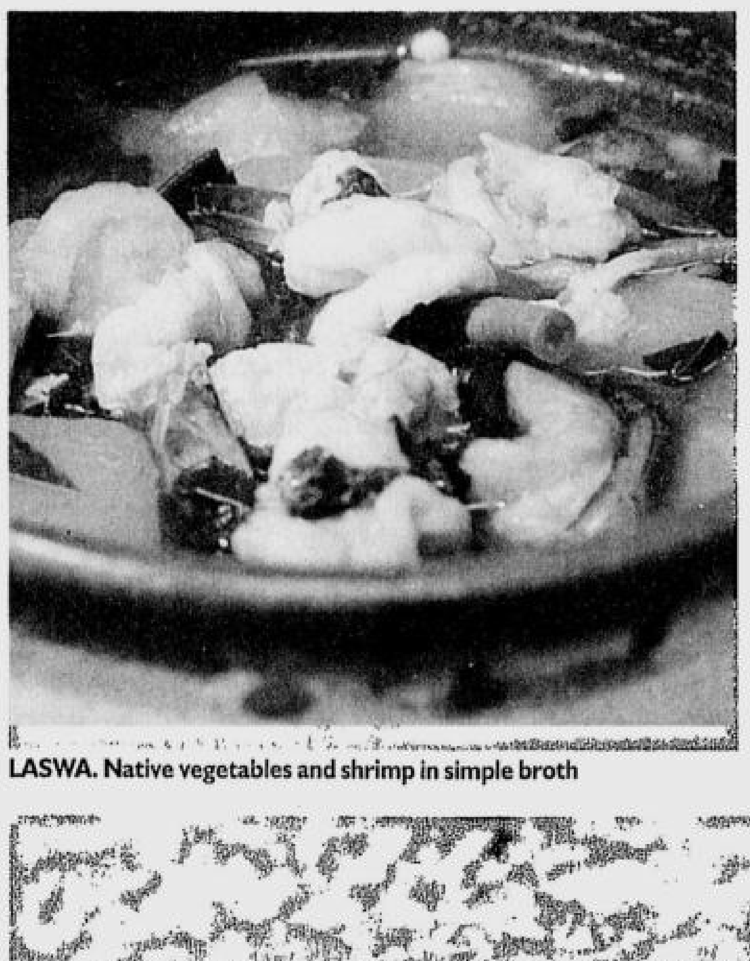
In a deep pan, heat the oil and sauté the garlic and onions. Add shrimp, *kalabasa*, *okra*, green papaya and *patola*. Pour in the soup stock and cook until the vegetables are tender. Season with salt and pepper. Add *saluyot* before serving. (Makes two servings)

Pollo Inasal

1 whole chicken, cleaned and sliced into quarters
30 g rock salt
50 g *calamansi* juice
30 ml vinegar
2 c water
salt and pepper to taste
annatto oil (for coloring)

Trim chicken and remove the bony protrusions. Rub rock salt on chicken and rinse well in running water. In a small bowl, combine *calamansi* juice, chopped garlic, white vinegar, water, salt, pepper, and annatto oil. Marinate the chicken in mixture overnight. Grill the chicken until tender. Brush with annatto oil before serving. (Makes four servings)

For inquiries and reservations, call 899-2145 or 896-3166.



LASWA. Native vegetables and shrimp in simple broth

POLLO Inasal is Grilled Chicken a la Ilonggo served with rice and best eaten *kinamót* (*kamayan* in Tagalog) style.

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Watch the country's top collegiate culinary teams, compete for the CGP2003 National Championship titles in the biggest and only CHED-endorsed culinary-trade competition in the country today!

NATIONAL GRAND FINALS
Monday, March 10, 2003
8:30am to 2:00pm
Phil. Trade & Training Center
Roxas Boulevard, Manila

ADMISSION IS FREE!

Win exciting door prizes that will be raffled within the day! Participate in the culinary games to be conducted by Caterplan! Visit the following booths!
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- Selecta
- The Heritage Hotel Manila
- A Taste of Italy
- NMI
- Cook Magazine
- KLG International Inc.
- Joey 92.3

CATERPLAN DREAM TEAM CHALLENGE COMPETITION

Top Prize: P45,000.00 cash, medals, trophy, gift packs, practicum placement assistance. P10,000.00 cash to the coach personal medal and gift pack. An all-expense Asian trip to HOFEX 2003 in May awaits the members of the team and their coach!

LUZON
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Juddy Ann F. Marasigan, Melton B. Cruz, Jr., Allan R. Dionisio * Adviser: Edilberto Tawagon

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UNIVERSITY OF MINDANAO
Celso Cutamora, Francis L. Maligro, Von Zergio Villarosa
Adviser: Christi M. Aldave

VISAYAS
UNIVERSITY OF CEBU - MAIN CAMPUS
Glenn Mark Dino, Lovella Jade Prejoles, Chinbi Uy
Adviser: Rene D. Osomo

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE MANILA
Camille Consuelo Calo, Jindi Clare de Guzman, Rayhana Bandali
Adviser: Amelia C. Tuble

Special Dream Team Challenge Awards

CALTEX LPG
THE CALTEX LPG "SULIT SA GAMIT" AWARD
An all expense-paid local holiday trip awaits the team with the lowest-priced menu and the highest score in taste from the official CGP2003 supplier of cooking gas!

THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA CULINARY SHOWCASE AWARD
Gift Certificates to the team with the highest combined points in plating, table setting and drink presentation from the official hotel of CGP2003!
THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA

KNORR NEW ASIA CUISINE COMPETITION

Top Prize: P10,000.00 cash, medal, trophy, gift pack and an all-expense Asian trip to HOFEX 2003 in May awaits the student-chef and his or her coach!

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ST. ANNE COLLEGE LUCENA, INC.
Niño Rodel Savilla
Adviser: Geronimo T. Gavilan

MINDANAO
PHIL. WOMEN'S COLLEGE OF DAVAO
Anelyn F. Jumao-As
Adviser: Ma. Julieta C. Maniego

VISAYAS
ST. THERESE - MTC COLLEGES
Oscar Cordova Jr.
Adviser: Cromwell R. Cabalu

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
OB MONTESSORI CENTER
Sheryl Ngo
Adviser: Raul T. De Leoz

Special New Asia Award

THE TASTE OF ITALY ASIAN FUSION AWARD
Gift pack to the team with the highest presentation points from the country's top importer of supplies and equipment from Europe!
A Taste of Italy

LIPTON MOCKTAIL MIXING COMPETITION

Top Prize: P10,000.00 cash, medal, trophy, gift pack and an all-expense Asian trip to HOFEX 2003 in May awaits the student-chef and his or her coach!

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UNIV. OF PERPETUAL HELP SYSTEM, LAGUNA
Waldemar D. Fadnga * Adviser: Nenita Daquz

MINDANAO
LOURDES COLLEGE
Julius Cesar Catalan * Adviser: Raquel Saab

VISAYAS
LA CONSOLACION COLLEGE - BACOLOD
George Lacson * Adviser: Gina B. Montes

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY
Donna May R. De Vera * Adviser: Jimson S. Aguilar

Special Mocktail Mixing Awards

JOEY 92.3 Rhythms
THE JOEY TAPSTER-IN-TRAINING AWARD
A special plaque to the student bartender who posts the highest points in flaring from the official radio station of CGP2003!

KLG
THE KLG SHOWSTOPPER AWARD
Bartending equipment to the student bartender with the highest points in showglass presentation from the country's top importer of foodservice equipment!

Selecta
SELECTA ICE CREAM FEATURE FLAVOR INVITATIONAL COMPETITION

Top Prize: P15,000.00 cash, trophy, gift pack and P8,000.00 cash to his/her coach!

CENTER FOR CULINARY ARTS
Enrico Caparas * Adviser: Chef Pauline Legdameo

CENTER FOR CULINARY ARTS
Corinna E.A. Nuqui
Adviser: Chef Ana Lois L. Cruz-Lerias

OUR LADY OF FATIMA COLLEGE - VALENZUELA
Erwin Rommel G. Silva * Adviser: Gemili M. Manio

SAN SEBASTIAN COLLEGE - RECOLETOS
Peewee G. Bravo * Adviser: Jocelyn S. Simon

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA CARMELI
Catherine Valerio * Adviser: Edilberto Tawagon

Nothing but the best: 3 vols of kitchen-tested recipes

A THREE-VOLUME collection of selected recipes called "Best Recipes from Nestlé" is a handy compilation of delicious recipes that have been developed and kitchen-tested by Nestlé Food Specialists.

The volume "Everyday Cooking" presents recipes that are perfect for day-to-day food preparation. Traditional everyday dishes are given a new twist. Homemakers will also enjoy a variety of new recipes that are easy and convenient to prepare.

"Special Cooking" offers unique dishes that make special celebrations more memorable. It is an ideal guide for those with adventurous culinary creations in mind.

"Chefs at JMK," the third volume, brings together the best recipes of the Julius Maggi Kitchen (JMK) of Nestlé Philippines. The volume compiles the masterpieces prepared and presented by known culinary experts who have served as guest demonstrators at JMK.

Featured chefs include Fem Aracama, Rox Cailao, Jeff Catral, Dorothy Ferreria, Jundy Gueco, Joanne Limoanco, Myrna Segismundo, Heny Sison and Vicky Villanueva.

"Best Recipes from Nestlé" is available in individual volumes at P140 each, or as a set three volumes with a free jacket for P420 at Nestlé Consumer Services, Nestlé Center, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Call 898-0061 for inquiries. For mailing orders, add a handling fee of P140 for 3 vols.; and P80 per volume and P100 for 2 vols. in Postal Money Order.

Following are recipes rendered and tested at JMK from a few of the experienced and accomplished chefs.

Joanne Limoanco's Tomato Cream Soup

2/3 c olive oil
1 large white onion
2 tbsp minced garlic
1 medium carrot, diced small
1 800-g can crushed tomatoes
fresh basil leaves
1 Maggi Chicken Broth Cube
2 c water
1 383-g can Nestlé Cream
1/4 cup light brown sugar
salt and pepper
toasted bread
1 240-g Nestlé Sour Cream

Heat olive oil in saucepan. Add onions and garlic. Saute until fragrant. Add carrots, cook until soft. Add crushed tomatoes and basil leaves. Add Maggi Chicken Broth Cube and water. Let it simmer, then transfer contents into a blender.

Puree until smooth. Strain contents into saucepan. Add Nestlé Cream and add star. Adjust seasoning. Serve with toasted bread with Nestlé Sour Cream.

Myrna Segismundo's Grilled Oriental Beef Burger

1/2 kg lean ground beef
100 g bell pepper, cored, seeded and minced
100 g green onions chopped
1 tbsp minced garlic
1/2 c fresh coriander, chopped
1 tbsp Maggi Chilli Sauce
1 tbsp Maggi Oyster Sauce
1 tbsp sesame oil
2 whole eggs, beaten
1 cup bread crumbs
1 tbsp Maggi Flavor-it Meat, Beef
salt and pepper to taste
Maggi Chilli Sauce and Maggi Oyster Sauce

Combine and simmer:
1 Maggi Beef Broth Cube
1 c water
1/4 c Maggi Oyster Sauce
1/4 c Maggi Chilli Sauce
1 tbsp cornstarch, diluted in 1 tbsp water
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Form into patties and chill overnight. Grill to desired doneness. Serve with more Maggi Chilli and Maggi Oyster Sauce.

Vicky Villanueva's Grilled Tilapia with BBQ and Chipotle Chili Sauce

BBQ Sauce:
1/2 cup corn oil
1 tbsp fresh garlic, minced
6 cups onions, diced
3 cups red pepper, stemmed, seeded and diced
1/2 cup chipotle chili
3 cups tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
3 1/2 cups Maggi Chilli Sauce
1 cup vinegar
1/2 cup honey
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
3 tbsp tomato paste
1 tbsp chili powder
1 tbsp Maggi Savor, Barbeque
1 Maggi Sinigang sa Sampalok Mix
1 bottle of beer

Heat oil over medium heat, add garlic, onion, peppers, chipotle and tomatoes; saute until soft.

Add Maggi Chilli Sauce, vinegar, honey, brown sugar, tomato paste, chili powder, Maggi Savor, Barbeque and Maggi Sinigang Sa Sampalok Mix; reduce heat to low; simmer for 2 hours. Add beer; simmer for 15 minutes; remove from heat, cool.

Transfer to a blender; pulse; transfer to clean container.

Tilapia:
1 tbsp lime zest
1 tbsp lemon zest
1/2 tbsp sechuan peppercorns
2 500 to 600-gram *tilapia*
canola oil for brushing

Pre-heat griller. Combine zest with peppercorns. Brush *tilapia* with oil, dust with zest mixture. Brush with barbecue sauce, continue to grill until done.

Dorothy Ferreria, the popular chef known for whipping delicious pastries and other delectable dishes, began her career by operating her own home-based bakeshop. She fulfilled her culinary studies abroad and went back to the Philippines in 1990 to open Dorothy's Cooking School in New Manila.

Dorothy enjoys her classes and gets satisfied when her students use the recipes they learned in class to come up with their own recipes. "It only means that you're giving inspiration to your students," she said.

Dorothy Ferreria's Pandan Leche Flan

Caramel gaze:
1 c sugar
1/2 c water
pinch of cream tartar

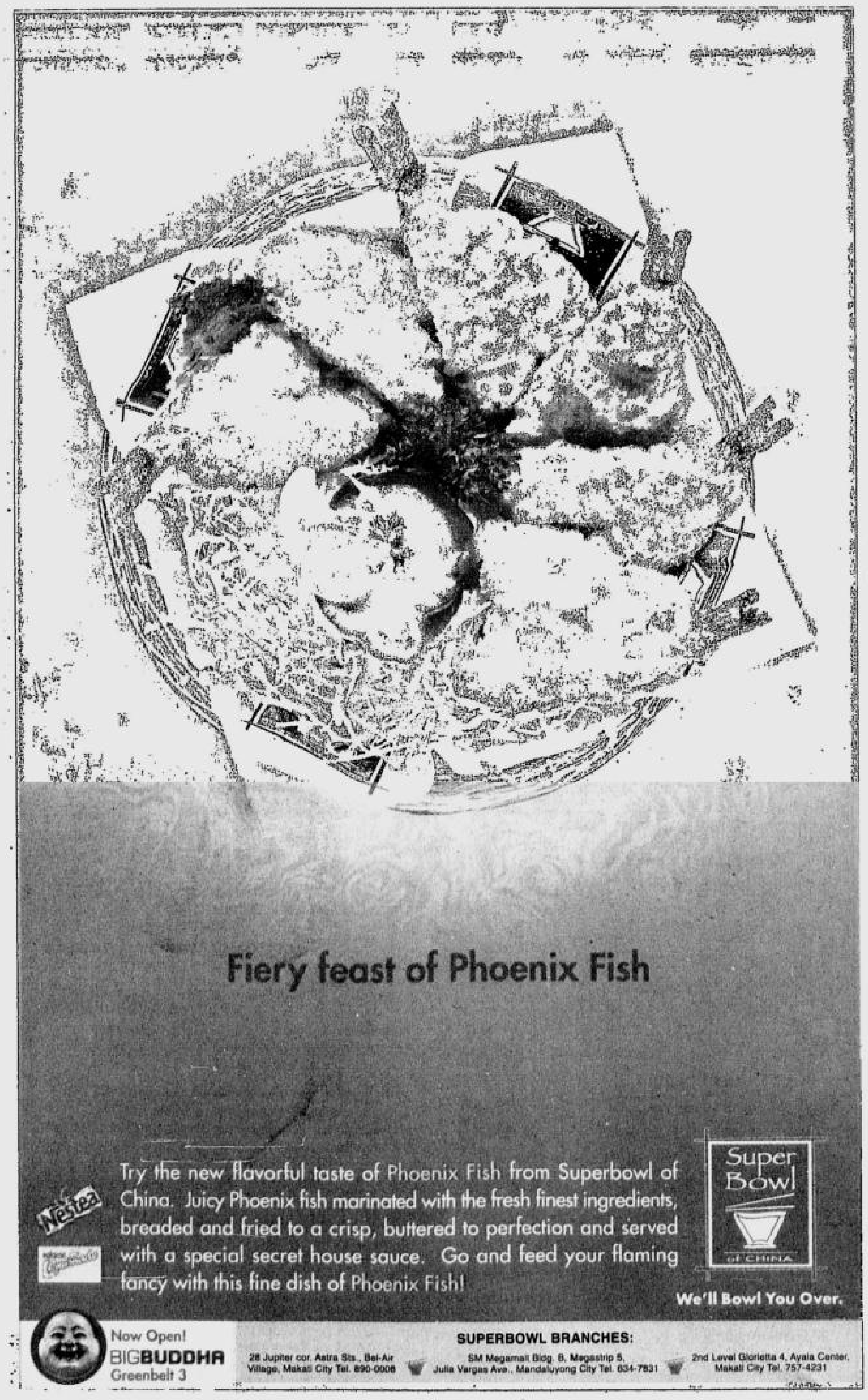
Flan:
2 cups Carnation Evap
6 pcs pandan
1 c caster sugar
6 egg yolks, plus
1 whole egg or 8 egg yolks

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

In a heavy saucepan, combine the following ingredients: Carnation Evap, pandan and white sugar. Place over medium heat and allow to boil only until the sugar has dissolved completely. Allow to cool with the pandan in the refrigerator until the liquid is cool to touch. Discard the pandan leaves.

Beat the eggs until blended in a mixing bowl. Add the pandan-milk mixture and mix until well-incorporated. Strain and set aside.

> Nestlé Philippines pursues its commitment to 'Good food, good life'


Fiery feast of Phoenix Fish

Try the new flavorful taste of Phoenix Fish from Superbowl of China. Juicy Phoenix fish marinated with the fresh finest ingredients, breaded and fried to a crisp, buttered to perfection and served with a special secret house sauce. Go and feed your flaming fancy with this fine dish of Phoenix Fish!

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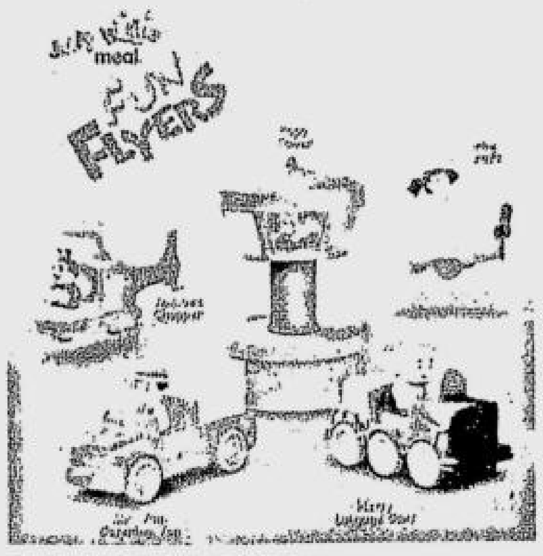
Free coffee for MMS subscribers

GLOBE MMS subscribers have until Feb. 28 to get a free short Starbucks Coffee of the Day as part of the cellular phone network's Coffee Connection Valentine promo. To avail of the joint promo of Globe and Starbucks, two of the country's leading purveyors of style and innovation, one must be a bonafide Globe MMS subscriber, with the MMS feature of his/her cell phone activated. MMS-ready phones include the Nokia 3530, 7210, 6100, 6610, 7650 and Sony-Ericsson's T68i and P800.

The subscriber then clicks the Coffee Connection link found in the MyGlobe GPRS portal. An MMS message received from 2325 will be used to claim the free coffee at any Starbucks outlet.

Subscribers could avail of the treat himself/herself or pass it on to friends or loved ones.



FLY HIGH WITH NEW TOYS

Take your kids on a jolly flight with the Jolly Kiddie Meal Fun Flyers.

The fun flyers come with every purchase of a Jolly Kiddie Meal in all Jollibee branches. The promo runs until March 12.

Children can collect five fun toys featuring Jollibee characters Twirlie, Hetty, Mr. Yum, Popo and Champ.

Workshop on food service management

A SEMINAR-WORKSHOP for restaurateurs, caterers, resort operators, and food service executives will be conducted by ProActive Center for Training, 2-6 p.m., Mar. 5-7, at Bedas Restaurant, C5, Libis, Quezon City.

The workshop, "Effective Marketing and Promotion of Your Food Service Business," aims to equip food service operators with basic knowledge and skills in marketing, advertising and promotions. Topics include preparing marketing and advertising plans, public relations and sales promotions in the food service business.

Seminar fee is P3,000 per participant. Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis at tel. 787-6370 or (0919) 550-0601. Only 20 participants will be accepted. Free shuttle service from SM Megamall to the venue and back will be provided.

Cooking workshop for beginners

LET San Miguel Purefoods (SMPFC) Culinary Center transform you into a most sought-after cook.

With "Can't Cook? Want to Cook! Cooking Workshop" for beginners, you will have the courage to wield pans, knives and other kitchen utensils. For four Saturdays—Mar. 8, 15, 22 and 29—culinary specialists of SMPFC will help you achieve the transformation.

Classes will be held 8 a.m.-2 p.m., San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, corner Legazpi and Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City. Fee is P2,000, which will include meals.

Call 671-9876 locals 402 and 405 to register. Limited slots available.

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

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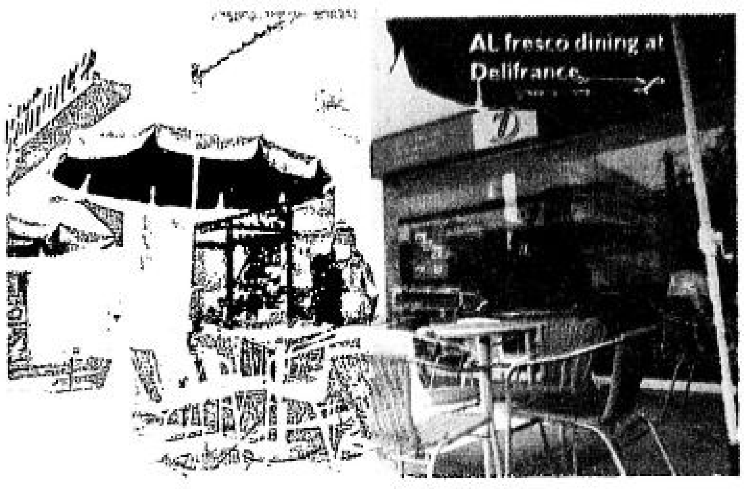
AL fresco dining at Delifrance

It takes a village

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

THE ONCE-SEEDY area beside the Harrison Plaza complex in Manila stirs with new life with the emergence of HP Village Square.

Dining choices range from moderately priced restaurants to a colorful and varied collection of family and casual diners. From burgers and pastries to chicken and pizza to Filipino and Vietnamese dishes, there's something for every taste and budget.

HP Village Square's list of diners include Yellow Cab, Pho bac, Seattle's Best Coffee,

IT TAKES/ D3

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Sexiest Hits 2

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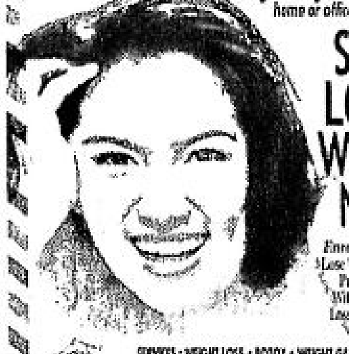

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MS. AVELINA CARBUNGCO FLORENDO introduced cake decorating technique in the Philippines the WILTON WAY, the AUSTRALIAN way of making gumpaste flowers with very fine strings and lace on fondant, the ENGLISH way or LAMBETH WORK of overpiped scrolls and strings of very tiny flowers, the SWISS CHOCOLATE TECHNIQUE and GUMPASTE DOLL course. She and her son Jun, introduced the latest technique which they learned in Telford, York & London, British Sugar craft and The International Cake Exploration Societe, August 24-28, 2002 at Nashville, Tennessee, U. S. A

1) March 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 2003 / 8:30 am - 5 pm - MASTER COURSE IN CAKE DECORATING - P8,500. Learn the practical & easy method of making icing flowers, borders, scrolls & strings, cake designing, sugar molding, color flow, color technique, wedding cake assembly. April 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 2003

2) March 8 - NEW CAKES, PASTRIES AND COOKIES - P3,000. Cooked Carrot Cake, Banana Cake, Peanut Butter, Coconut, Chocolate Chips & Chocolate Nut Cookies, Hopia, Siopao. March 12, 2003

3) March 10, 11, 12, 13, 2003 / 8:30 am - 5pm - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD CAKE DECORATING - P8,500. New method of gumpaste, flowers, objects, marzipan, quilling, swags & ribbons, ribbon insertion, finest string works, lace pieces, fondant, chocolate fondant. March 31-April 1, 2, 3

4) March 15 - LEARN SUGAR-FREE CAKES AND BREADS - P4,000. Banana Cake, Apple Almond Cake, Chocolate Walnut Cookies, Carrot Cake, All Wheat Bread & Raisin Bread. April 19, 2003

5) March 17, 18, 19, 20 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES WITH RECIPE - P4,000 each. 1) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-Waling 2) Rose, Catleya, Cymbidium 3) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies 4) Open Rose, Hydrangea, Grapes. - (Each set are lessons covered for one day.)

6) March 12, 2003 / 8am - 5pm - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT USING LACE MATS, NEW ROLLING PIN, SWAGS, RIBBONS & QUILTING - P3,000. April 23,2003 (Wednesday)

7) March 22, 2003 - DRAGEE & RIBBON MAKING - P3,000. Make your own edible dragees pearl, silver, gold & any color, ribbon of any size using new textured rollers. April 26, 2003

8) March 17, 18, 19, 20, 2003 / 8 am - 5 pm - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - P10,500 (including ingredients). 30 recipes of the basic cakes, breads, pies, pastries and cookies. April 21, 22, 23, 24, 2003

9) March 18, 19, 20, 21, 2003 / 8 am - 5 pm -COLD PORCELAIN DOLL 4 Day Course- P10,500. Make everlasting dolls using the latest technique in cold porcelain. April 22, 23, 24, 25

10) March 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 - SPECIAL BAKING - P11,500. Learn to make 30 kinds of special cakes from around the world. Each cake has different icing and decoration. April 28, 29, 30 - May 1, 2, 2003

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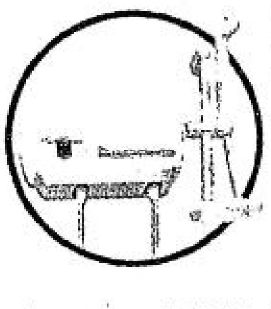

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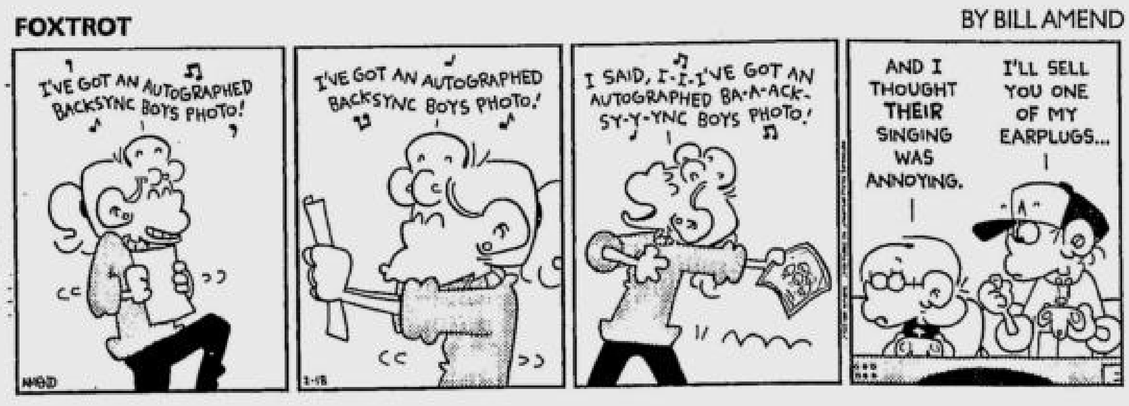
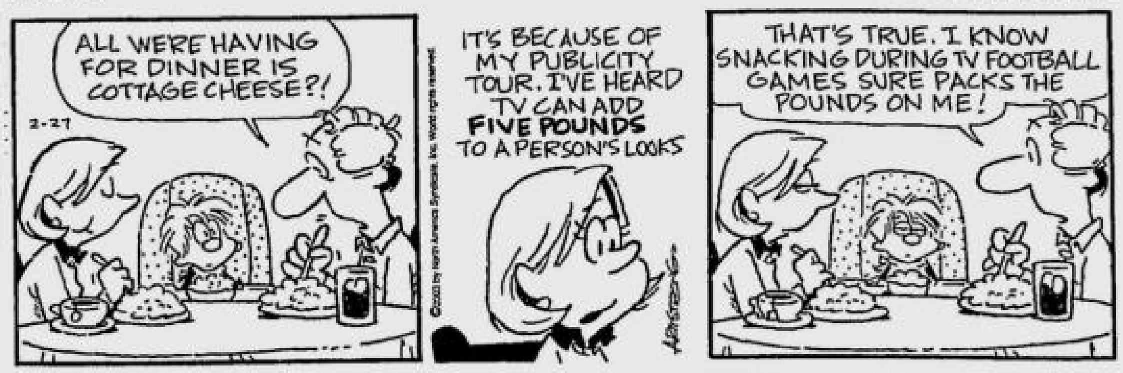
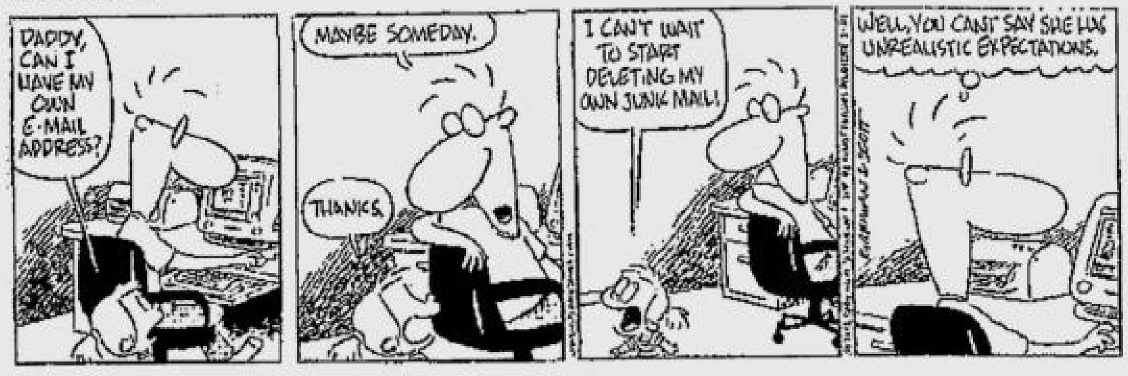

I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BACKSYNC BOYS PHOTO!
I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BACKSYNC BOYS PHOTO!
I SAID, I-I-I'VE GOT AN AUTOGRAPHED BA-A-ACK-SY-Y-YNC BOYS PHOTO!
AND I THOUGHT THEIR SINGING WAS ANNOYING.
I'LL SELL YOU ONE OF MY EARPLUGS...

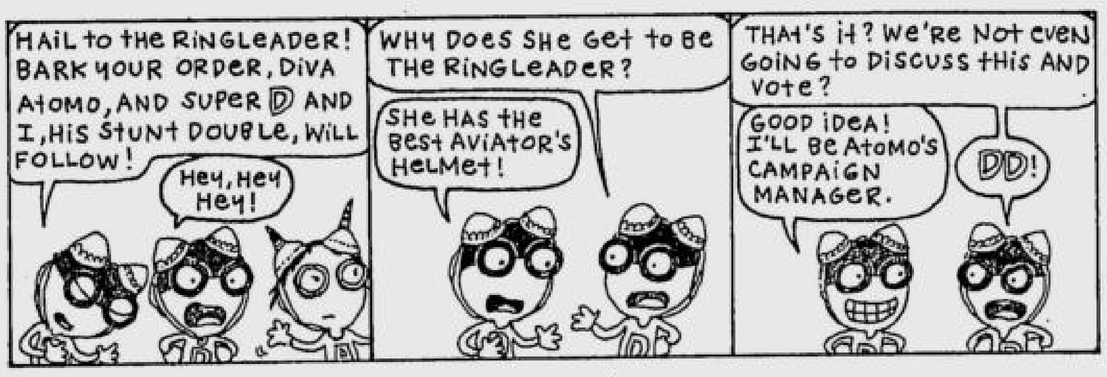
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


2-27
ALL WE'RE HAVING FOR DINNER IS COTTAGE CHEESE?!
IT'S BECAUSE OF MY PUBLICITY TOUR. I'VE HEARD TV CAN ADD FIVE POUNDS TO A PERSON'S LOOKS
THAT'S TRUE. I KNOW SNACKING DURING TV FOOTBALL GAMES SURE PACKS THE POUNDS ON ME!

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY, CAN I HAVE MY OWN E-MAIL ADDRESS?
MAYBE SOMEDAY.
THANKS.
I CAN'T WAIT TO START DELETING MY OWN JUNK MAIL!
WELL, YOU CAN'T SAY SHE HAS UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HAIL to the RINGLEADER! BARK YOUR ORDER, DIVA Atomo, AND SUPER D AND I, HIS Stunt DOUBLE, WILL FOLLOW!
Hey, Hey Hey!
WHY DOES SHE Get to Be The RINGLEADER?
SHE HAS the Best AVIATOR'S HELMet!
THAT'S it? We're Not even GOING to DISCUSS this AND Vote?
GOOD IDEA! I'LL BE Atomo's CAMPAIGN MANAGER.
DD!

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are definitely vibrant, alive and energetic. You have a natural zest for life. You easily get carried away with new endeavors. Generally speaking, you are likely to experience more of life than the average individual. The year ahead can be one of the most fortunate years of your life. Believe in yourself!
Birthdate of: Eric Lindros, hockey player; Charles Durning, actor; Mercedes Ruehl, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Enjoy pleasant discussions with friends today. Because you find it easy to see the best in others now, they will see the best in you as well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You have a strong need to talk to others about your long-term goals. You're not sure where your life direction lies. Don't worry; you will see this in time.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a wonderful day to discuss art, literature, music and foreign cultures. You feel more worldly, because your appreciation of beauty is heightened.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your sense of responsibility for someone is strong today. You see that it is a joy to labor for those you love -- not an onerous obligation.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Someone close to you easily stirs feelings of sympathy within you. You want to offer assistance, encouragement, comfort or whatever you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You don't mind rolling up your sleeves and helping co-workers today. It is easy to see that what goes around comes around. This means that ultimately, you are helping your future self.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Idealistic feelings about romance and love stir your soul. Similarly, your love of children and concern for their welfare is very strong. (This is good.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You need to be by yourself for a little bit today. Memories from your past give you something to think about. Give yourself time to digest and process this.

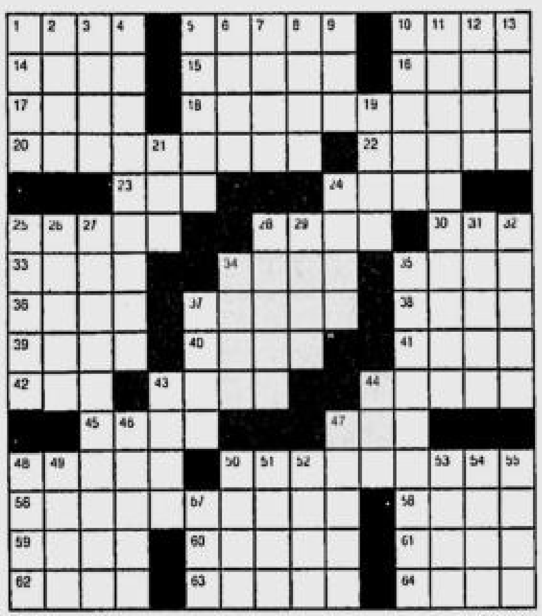
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): We rarely tell those we see every day how fond we are of them. Don't make this mistake or let them guess. Tell others how much you really care for them.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Because your reputation matters, you enjoy wearing clothing that gives you status. Today you want to spend your money on something rather luxurious. If you can afford it, do it!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel a bit like Mother Theresa today. You want to improve the world in any way that you can. You see that what is done to one is truly done to all.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are willing to sacrifice your needs and wants for the benefit of someone else today. However, you do not see it as sacrifice. In fact, you see it as an opportunity to be helpful.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD
2/27/03

ACROSS
1 Lounge around
5 Russian villa
10 Herring cousin
14 Glamour competition
15 Mr. Fudd
16 Royal Crown
17 Having wings
18 Unemployed lodger?
20 Elfin cauda?
22 Perch
23 Yippee!
24 Northern Scandinavian
25 Words in "Self-Help" titles
28 Dirty
30 Center
33 Workplace injury grp.
34 Ali __
35 Ear flap
36 Sm. runway aircraft
37 With 28D, spice cabinet?
38 Hydroxyl compound
39 Scope starter?
40 Birch or maple
41 Calf meat
42 Our star
43 Catafalque
44 Relaxes
45 French/Belgian river
47 Dogpatch Daisy
48 Titter
50 Ice field breakups?
56 Role model gossip?
58 Falco or McClurg
59 Corduroy rib
60 __ Fe, NM
61 Evil
62 Vanderbilt and Irving
63 Awry
64 Yip

DOWN
1 Page
2 Earthenware jar
3 Jai __
4 Yarn about commuting from Staten Island?
5 God
6 "M*A*S*H" star
7 951
8 Canine command
9 LAX info letters
10 Inside skinny
11 This puzzle's theme
12 Pub fare
13 Pub missile
19 Verbal
21 Ming of the Rockets
24 Prevaricator
25 Hospitality providers
26 Bone: Pref.
27 Saintly?
28 See 37A
29 Hautboy
31 WWII sub
32 __ and whistles
34 Uncovered
35 Riparian tax?
37 Roll
43 Bock or porter
44 Brit. flyboys
46 Tennis star Monica
47 Tablelands
48 Pueblo people
49 Dutch cheese
50 Radio switch letters
51 Anderson of "WKRP in Cincinnati"
52 Repast remnants
53 Garfield's bud
54 Fortitude
55 Ooze
57 OAS member

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	A	T	■	G	A	M	E	■	D	A	D	A	S
T	A	R	A	■	A	C	D	C	■	E	L	E	N	A
O	V	A	L	■	L	I	L	O	■	L	E	N	T	O
P	I	N	K	C	A	D	I	L	L	A	C	■	■	■
■	■	■	B	A	H	S	■	■	E	N	S	O	U	L
A	R	C	A	N	A	■	P	A	N	E	■	E	P	A
M	E	R	C	E	D	E	S	B	O	Y	■	N	E	R
A	D	A	K	■	■	R	A	E	■	■	T	O	N	I
N	E	T	■	L	I	T	T	L	E	H	O	N	D	A
D	Y	E	■	O	D	E	S	■	L	O	W	E	S	T
A	E	R	A	T	E	■	■	K	E	E	P	■	■	■
■	■	■	M	U	S	T	A	N	G	S	A	L	L	Y
C	A	M	U	S	■	A	R	E	A	■	T	I	M	E
A	R	O	S	E	■	O	P	E	N	■	H	A	N	A
B	R	I	E	S	■	S	A	L	T	■	S	R	O	S

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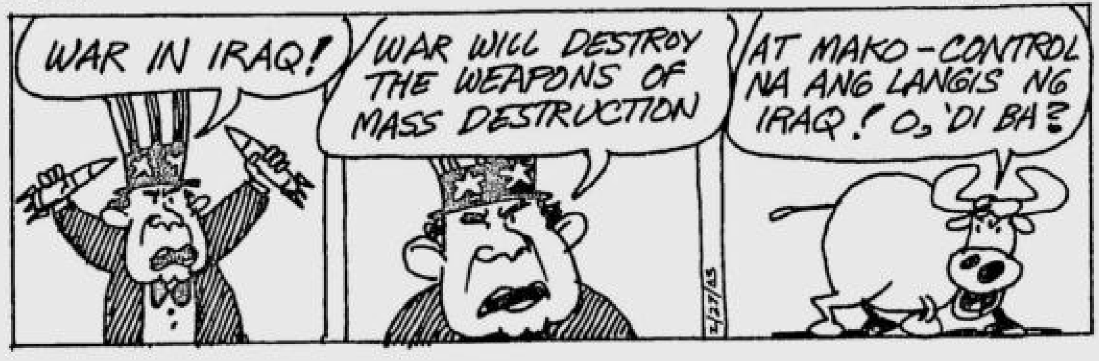
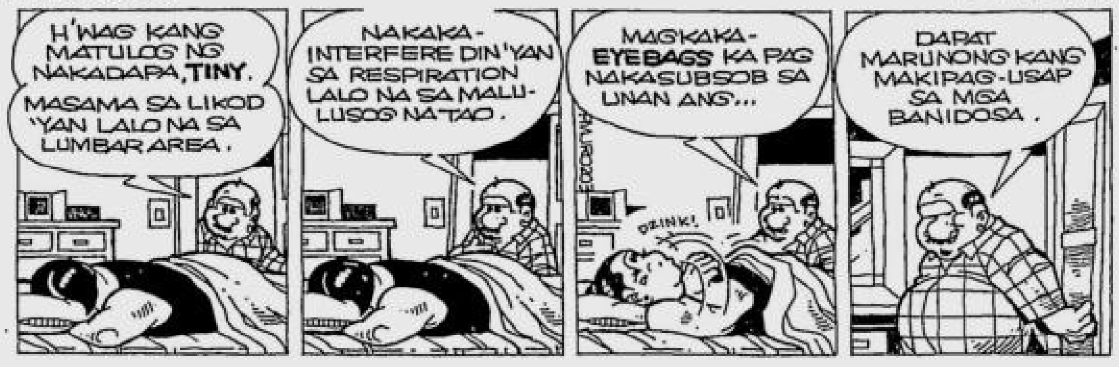
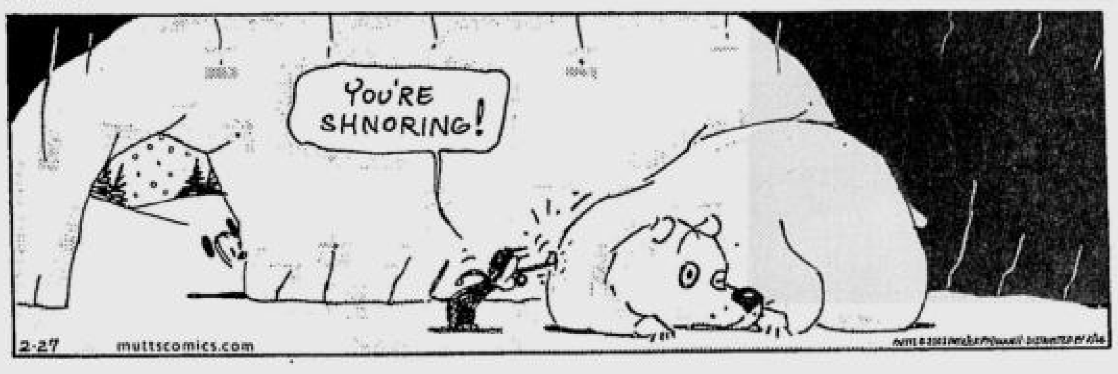
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


WAR IN IRAQ!
WAR WILL DESTROY THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
AT MAKO-CONTROL NA ANG LANGIS NG IRAQ! O, 'DI BA?
2/27/03

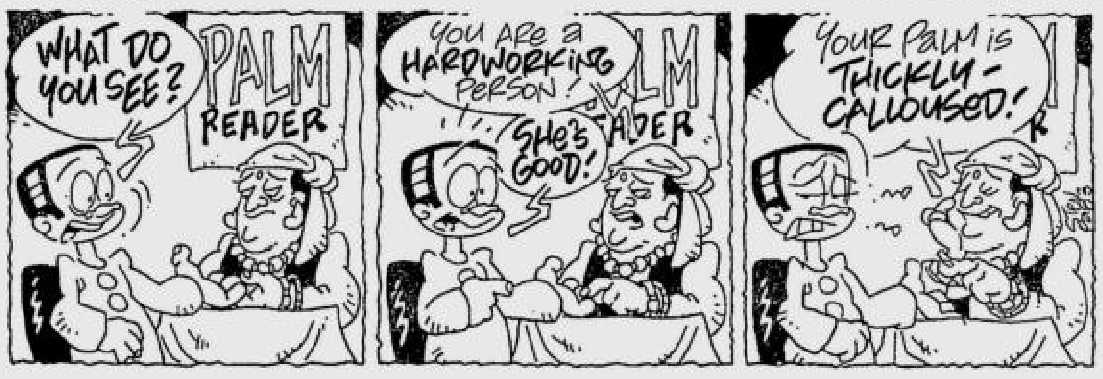
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


H'WAG KANG MATULOG NG NAKADAPA, TINY.
MASAMA SA LIKOD 'YAN LALO NA SA LUMBAR AREA.
NAKAKA-INTERFERE DIN 'YAN SA RESPIRATION LALO NA SA MALULUSOG NA TAO.
MAGKAKA-EYEBAGS KA PAG NAKASUBSOB SA UNAN ANG...
DRINK!
DAPAT MARUNONG KANG MAKIPAG-USAP SA MGA BANIDOSA.

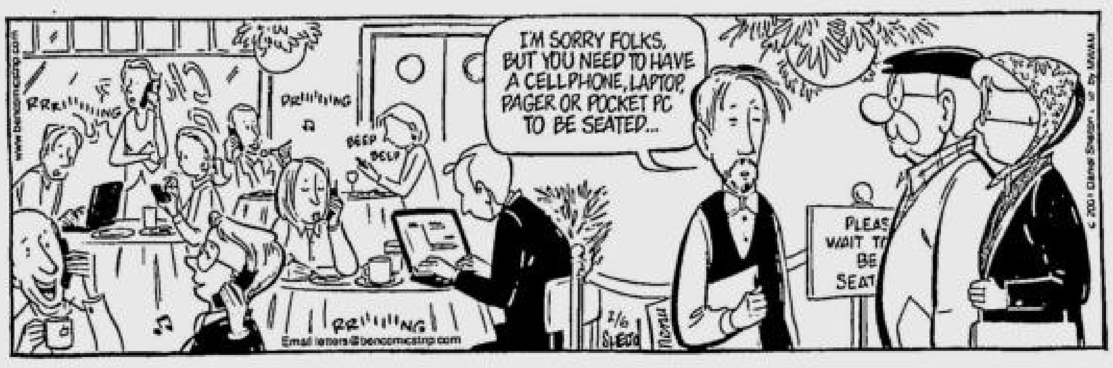
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


YOU'RE SHNORING!
2-27
muttscomics.com

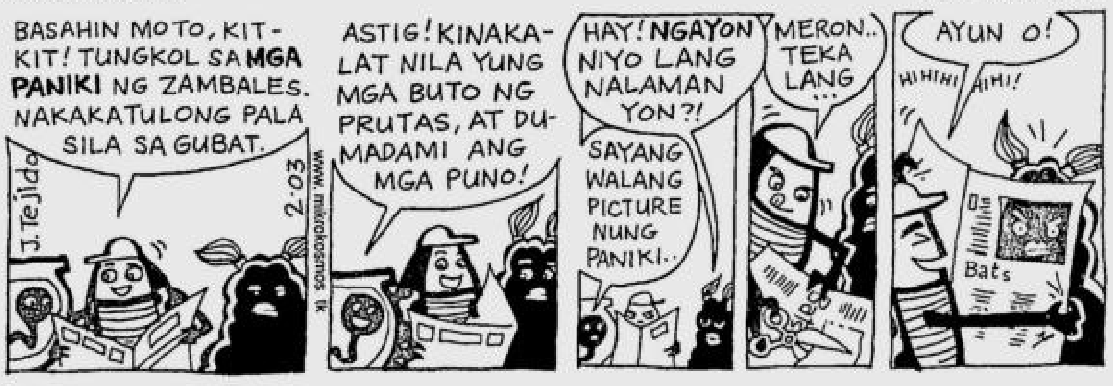
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHAT DO YOU SEE?
PALM READER
YOU ARE A HARDWORKING PERSON!
SHE'S GOOD!
YOUR PALM IS THICKLY-CALLOUSED!

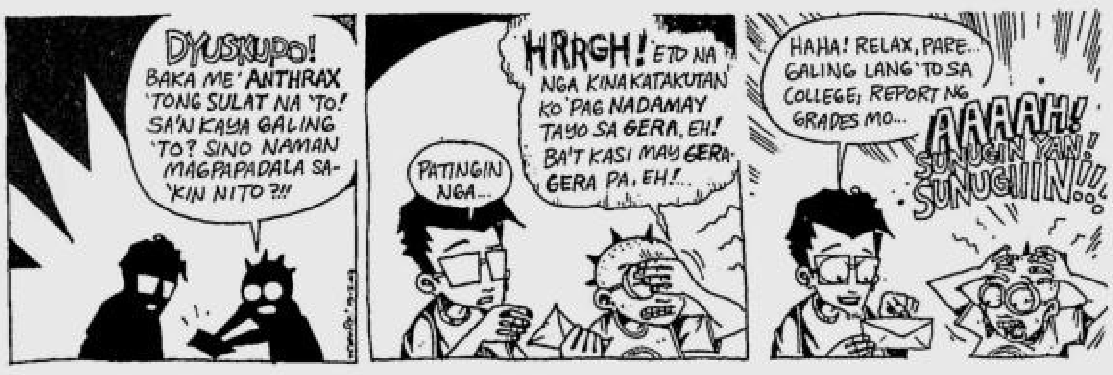
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


RRRIIIIING
DRIIIING
BEEP BEEP
I'M SORRY FOLKS, BUT YOU NEED TO HAVE A CELLPHONE, LAPTOP, PAGER OR POCKET PC TO BE SEATED...
PLEASE WAIT TO BE SEAT
RRIIIING
Email letters@bencomicstrip.com

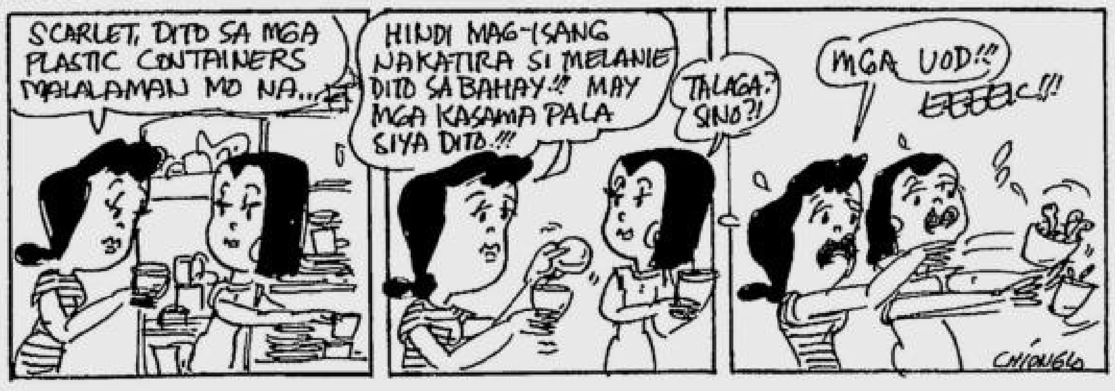
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BASAHIN MO TO, KIT-KIT! TUNGKOL SA MGA PANIKI NG ZAMBALES. NAKAKATULONG PALA SILA SA GUBAT.
J. Tejido
2-03
www.mikrokosmos.tk
ASTIG! KINAKALAT NILA YUNG MGA BUTO NG PRUTAS, AT DUMADAMI ANG MGA PUNO!
HAY! NGAYON NIYO LANG NALAMAN YON?!
SAYANG WALANG PICTURE NUNG PANIKI..
MERON.. TEKA LANG...
AYUN O!
HIHIHI HIHI!
Bats

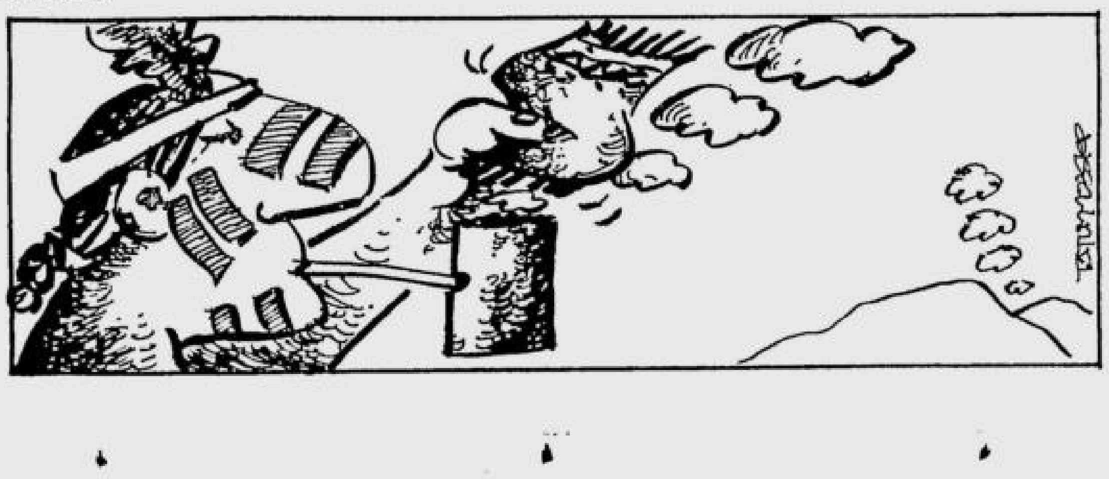
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


DYUSKUPO! BAKA ME' ANTHRAX 'TONG SULAT NA 'TO! SA'N KAYA GALING 'TO? SINO NAMAN MAGPAPADALA SA-'KIN NITO?!!
PATINGIN NGA...
HRRGH! ETO NA NGA KINAKATAKUTAN KO 'PAG NADAMAY TAYO SA GERA, EH! BA'T KASI MAY GERA-GERA PA, EH!...
HAHA! RELAX, PARE.. GALING LANG 'TO SA COLLEGE; REPORT NG GRADES MO...
AAAAH! SUNUGIN YAN! SUNUGIIIN!!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SCARLET, DITO SA MGA PLASTIC CONTAINERS MALALAMAN MO NA...
HINDI MAG-ISANG NAKATIRA SI MELANIE DITO SA BAHAY!!! MAY MGA KASAMA PALA SIYA DITO!!!
TALAGA? SINO?!
MGA UOD!!!
EEEEK!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



ENJOY your coffee at Seattle's Best.

IRENE Martel Francisco, co-owner of HP Village Square with siblings Robert and Tonette Martel.

It takes a village

From page D1

Delifrance, and the ever-present McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken fast-food franchises.

A café bistro, a Chinese restaurant and an Indian specialty place will also be put up.

Strategically located along the busy commercial streets of Mabini and Vito Cruz in Malate, Manila, HP Village Square is envisioned to be a dining and entertainment center that gives people more chances to enjoy a selection of food outlets operating until midnight or even later.

At present, the Village Square features eight diners.

"We're coming up with more restaurants, cafés and fast-food stores of the highest possible quality, yet offering both clients and tenants an exclusivity of market, a new concept in malls and food courts for the Metro Manila market," says Irene Martel Francisco, who co-owns HP Village Square with brother Robert Martel and sister Tonette Martel.

Lifestyle center

Designed by architect Kenny Kuintal, the 1,000-sq-m HP Village Square combines the tropical elements of Asian contemporary design and the warmth of Mediterranean architecture.

Elevations facing both the east and north feature terra-cotta shaded roof tiles while the south and west elevations project a lively atmosphere to the tree-lined Mabini Street fronting Bangko Sentral.

A covered arcade along the building's perimeter will encourage interaction and pedestrian traffic flows. At the side of Mabini Street, you'll find ample space for outdoor seating spill-outs and parking spaces.

"Careful planning and design has produced perfectly oriented spaces that are 'right-size' for efficiency," says Francisco.

HP Village Square features casual and family-oriented outlets, entertainment and extended-hour cafés and bars and a slot machine arcade, which will all be completed in July.

The entrance to the entertainment semi-anchor will be flanked with cafés and restaurants to encourage patrons to stay longer within the center.

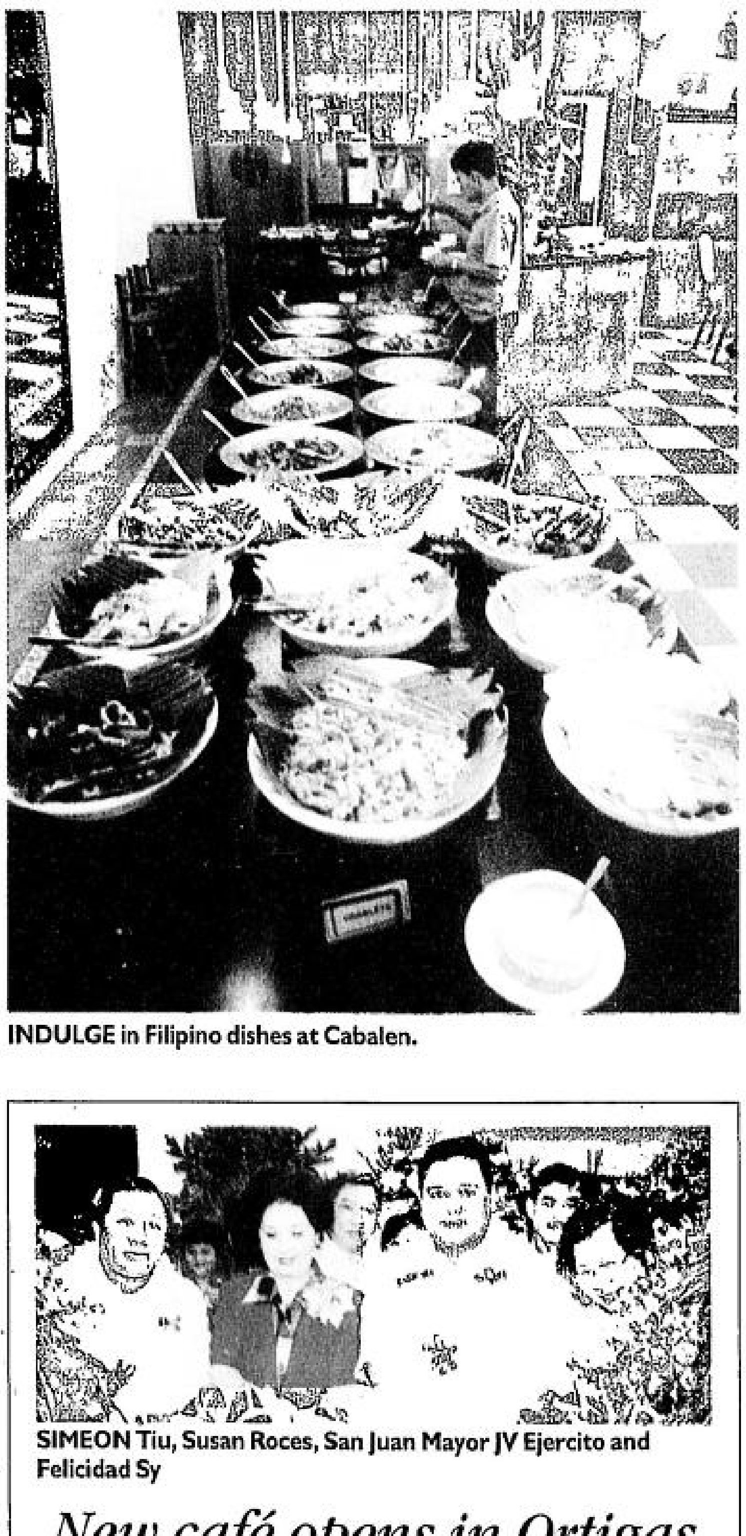
The covered arcades are ideal for café seating or strolling while large canopies will allow the outlets to project their own identity colors, which will add to the festive atmosphere of the HP Village Square.

"The HP Village Square is a new lifestyle center where people can relax, eat a good meal and enjoy performances," notes Francisco.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

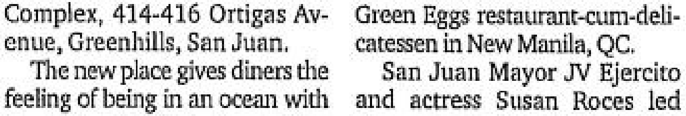
A dining and entertainment hub called the HP Village Square should spruce up the Vito Cruz-Mabini area

HARRISON Plaza Village Square's garden



INDULGE in Filipino dishes at Cabalen.

DELIFRANCE'S delightful treats



SIMEON Tiu, Susan Roces, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and Felicidad Sy

New café opens in Ortigas

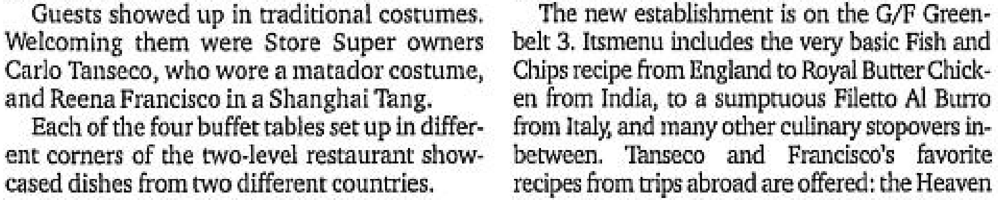
THE BLUE Bacon Café opened recently on the 3/F E-Square Complex, 414-416 Ortigas Avenue, Greenhills, San Juan.

The new place gives diners the feeling of being in an ocean with its marine-inspired decor. Blue Bacon Cafe offers a fresh selection of local and imported food.

It is another joint venture of Mike Prado and Boyd Deriquito, who started with Blue Bacon and Green Eggs restaurant-cum-delicatessen in New Manila, QC.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and actress Susan Roces led the ceremonial ribbon-cutting. Also present were Felicidad Sy and Simeon Tiu.

Call 724-3902/3887.



CARLO Tanseco, Reena Francisco, Irene Martel-Francisco, Chit Juan, Keena de Jesus and Mike Hilado

RAUL Francisco, Joanna Preysler and Alex Lichaytoo

Formal presentation of 'global' menu

STORE Super, a café featuring select recipes from different parts of the world, formally opened recently with a colorful buffet dinner party that echoed its unique concept.

Guests showed up in traditional costumes. Welcoming them were Store Super owners Carlo Tanseco, who wore a matador costume, and Reena Francisco in a Shanghai Tang.

Each of the four buffet tables set up in different corners of the two-level restaurant showcased dishes from two different countries.

A special table was exclusively for desserts prepared by pastry chef Millet Soberano. Each guest got a special passport that was stamped in each food station. After the passport was stamped in all tables, guests got a special CD collection from Store Super.

The new establishment is on the G/F Greenbelt 3. Itsmenu includes the very basic Fish and Chips recipe from England to Royal Butter Chicken from India, to a sumptuous Filetto Al Burro from Italy, and many other culinary stopovers in-between. Tanseco and Francisco's favorite recipes from trips abroad are offered: the Heaven Beef with Sticky Rice from Thailand, Hainanese Chicken Rice of Singapore, Grilled Salmon Teriyaki from Japan, among others.

Among the guests were Lucy Torres-Gomez, Miguel Pastor and Ben Chan; Leah Puyat and Anton Barretto, Mary Ann Lumen, Rajo Laurel, Miguel Villanueva, Irene Martel Francisco, the Francisco brothers Robert, Randy and Raul; Rissa Samson, Virgie Prieto, Judith Katigbak, Alex Lichaytoo, Luccia Jacinto, Tony Herbosa, Rick Yupangco, Tina Tinio and Alvin Ledesma, Santi Picornell, Heidi Ng, Ana Gonzales, Rachy Cuna, Allison David, Girlie Rodis, Rowena Tomeldan and Myrna Fernandez.

Senior citizens 'losing' discount due to incomplete implementation of law

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

THERE is only one reason why business establishments hesitate to give the 20-percent discount to senior citizens as mandated by Republic Act 7432: The stores are not getting the tax credit due them from the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The stores claim they are losing a lot of money by giving the 20-percent discount to senior citizens. Under RA 7432, they are supposed to get a corresponding 20 percent tax credit for the discount for senior citizens.

Based on complaints we get, some establishments now tell customers bluntly that they don't honor senior citizens' discount cards. Other stores have come up with various schemes to avoid giving discounts.

One rampant practice by drugstores is to tell the customer that the product is out of stock, especially if a large volume is being bought. Another common ploy is to sell only a few pieces.

Here are typical complaints:

Gloria Nuguid of VG Cruz Street, Sta. Mesa, wrote: "It was very obvious that customers carrying senior citizens booklets are ignored by the sales people at Mercury-Bustillos. I was going to buy medicine for my mother, a senior citizen, and had been waiting for 10 minutes when an elderly lady arrived. She also carried a senior citizen's booklet. The sales people continued to ignore us, and they seemed to avoid looking in our direction. Needless to say, it was because we were holding senior citizen's booklets and privilege cards. We decided to leave eventually as the sales clerks obviously preferred (the other) customers.

"I know that the 20 percent discount to senior citizens will not hurt local drugstores considering the big margin of profit they earn from their high-priced medicine. The Department of Health (DOH) made a survey and disclosed that the cost of medicine in the Philippine is one of the highest, compared to other Asian countries."

From Connie Angeles of Bayanihan Village: "Mercury Drug in Pasig honors my senior citizen's discount card. But I don't thank them for it because they just give me a fraction of the volume of my prescription... For example, I needed to buy several bottles of Vitamin C for my trip to the United States. All they gave me was good for two weeks."

From a patient at the San Juan Medical Center: "Calling Mayor JV Ejercito. There's a drugstore next to the municipal hospital that refuses to honor senior citizen's discount privilege."

(This columnist checked the complaint by visiting the two drugstores next to the municipal hospital. Here is what we found out: Mercury Drugstore on N. Domingo honored senior citizen's discount cards, even if holders were below 60 years old, the age limit.

True enough, the only other drugstore in the vicinity did not grant the senior citizens discount. When sales clerks were asked why, they immediately explained that the "government does not give the store owner his due tax credit for senior citizens' discount. *Malulugi naman.*"

Reason stores violate RA 7432

Some time ago, we wrote about similar complaints from readers. Trade and Industry Sec. Mar Roxas replied promptly. He said: "We wrote the commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue for a clarification on the guidelines authorizing retailers to claim tax credit for discounts to senior citizens. The lack of guidelines has often been cited by several retailers, restaurants, hotels and *boticas*. Under Section 4 (a) of Republic Act 7432, the retailers must give discounts of 20 percent to senior citizens, provided that private establishments may claim the cost as tax credit.

"But for as long as there are no BIR guidelines on tax credits, the stores could go on claiming that they cannot continue to shoulder the cost. Bigger establishments, however, extend discounts to their customers. These establishments include airlines, theaters, drugstores and supermarkets."

More on RA 7432

Here are answers to queries from readers:

What is the complete title of the senior citizens law?

Republic Act No. 7432, "An Act to maximize the contribution of senior citizens to nation building, grant benefits and special privileges, and for other purposes."

Stores say they lose a lot of money by giving the 20-percent discount to senior citizens

What is the age when Filipinos can be called senior citizens?

Section 2 defines a senior citizen as "any resident citizen of the Philippines, at least 60 years old, including those who have retired from both government offices and private enterprises, and has an income of not more than sixty thousand pesos (P60,000) per annum subject to review by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) every three years."

What specifically are the privileges of senior citizens?

"(1) 20-percent discount from all establishments relative to utilization of transportation services, hotels and similar lodging establishment, restaurants and recreation centers, and purchase of medicine anywhere in the country, provided, that private establishments may claim the cost as tax credit.

"(2) Minimum of 20-percent discount on admission fees charged by theaters, cinemas, houses and concert halls, circuses, carnivals, and other similar places of culture, leisure, and amusement.

"(3) Exemption from payment of individual income taxes, provided that their annual taxable income does not exceed the property level as determined by the Neda for that year.

"(4) Exemption from training fees for socio-economic programs undertaken by the Office for Senior Citizen Affairs.

"(5) Free medical and dental services in government establishment anywhere in the country, subject to guidelines to be issued by the Department of Health, Government Service Insurance System, and the Social Security System.

"(6) To the extent practicable and feasible, the continuance of the same benefits and privileges given by the GSIS, SSS and Pag-ibig, as the case may be, enjoyed by those in actual service."

For more details (and for copy of the senior citizens law), write to the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection, 2/F, Trade and Industry Bldg., 261 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200.

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph

Learn to cook Asian dishes

EXPAND your culinary repertoire by learning new dishes at the Maya Kitchen.

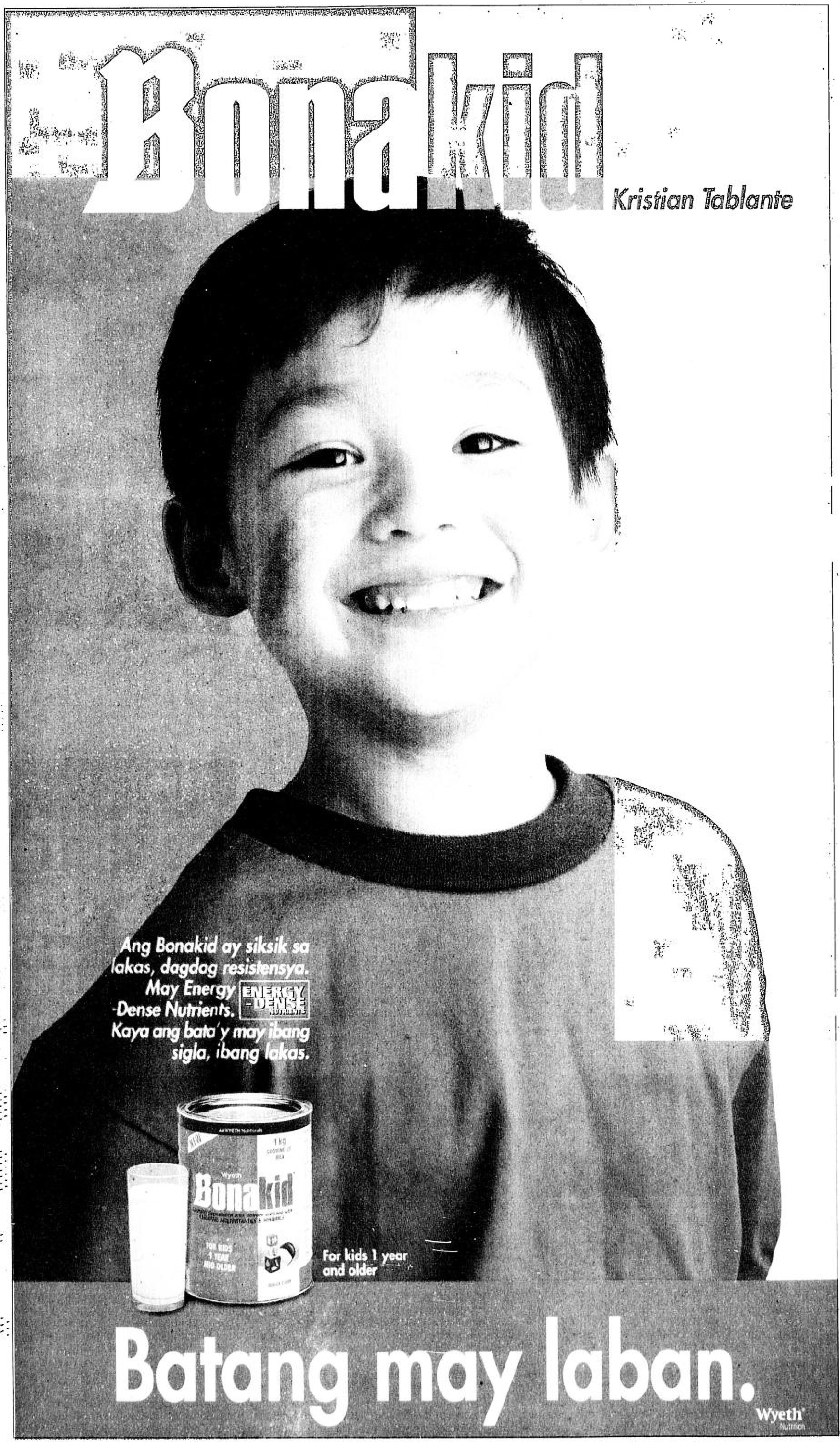
Chef Sita Ram gives familiar recipes exciting new twists in a morning class on the fine art of Asian Cooking.

The Asian Cooking course includes such recipes as seafood, chicken, beef spareribs, and soup and sauce base for Mongolian and shabu-shabu.

On Mar. 1, the session will be on Japanese Cooking (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) and covers Miso Soup, Mixed Tempura, Sukiyaki, Kamameshi, assorted Sushi, Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki and Nigiri.

A Bakery and Bakeshop class will be held on the same day, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. It will cover everything one needs to know about baking, from the commercial methods of preparing breads, pies, and cakes, production batching, and costing to ensure efficient use of ingredients and maximize profits.

The Maya Kitchen is at the 8/F, Liberty Building, Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 892-1185/5011 local 108, or email mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.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Bonakid
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Batang may laban.
Wyeth Nutrition

INQ7 Beyond

Beyond the Web: The INQ7 experience

By Joey G. Alarilla
INQ7.net

WHERE do you go if you're already the most visited and most respected Philippine news website? Far from resting on its laurels, INQ7.net continues to evolve and improve its services, going beyond the Web to reach out to even more Filipinos.

As INQ7 Interactive Inc. celebrates its second year, readers can expect many exciting changes even as INQ7.net remains the same trusted source of online news.

"As far as editorial excellence is concerned, there will be no changes in INQ7.net. We will continue to deliver the headline stories of the Inquirer as well as real-time updates only available in INQ7 news. At least 600, 000 people a month here and all over the world access INQ7 news and have made the service a regular part of their day. They have been accustomed to using our breaking news as well as our updated videos from GMA Network The world is running at breakneck speed and INQ7.net has kept people abreast of the latest developments," said INQ7 president Paolo Prieto.

"What will change is the way we deliver the news. We are working hard to innovate and come up with more ways to reach more Filipinos. We are working to improve our wireless services. We are working on expanding our local news for overseas Filipino workers. We have also come up with a redesign to improve the visual presentation and interactivity of INQ7.net. This is in line with our mission to be the number one Philippine online source of news and information — a goal we have reached and will maintain for as long as INQ7.net is here," Prieto said.

A joint venture between the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network, INQ7 Interactive Inc. was formally launched on Feb. 27, 2001. As a partnership between two media giants, INQ7.net has benefited from the strengths of its mother companies, integrating print, video and audio and developing original online content. This allows the reader to experience the news in a way that cannot be replicated on a single medium.

An INQ7.net reader, for example, can browse the text of an article written by INQ7.net and Inquirer reporters, view related streaming video from GMA Network's Frontpage and Saksi news programs, and hear streaming audio from radio station dzBB. Through hyperlinks, they can experience the news in greater depth by browsing related articles, reading background material and viewing electronic copies of important documents.

The Web's interactivity also allows them to immediately share their opinion not only to INQ7.net but also to other readers — through e-mail, the Discussions online message boards, feedback forms, online polls and surveys. Felipe L. Gozon, chair of the board of INQ7, said this kind of user experience shows the synergy between GMA and the Inquirer and their firm commitment to this partnership. Gozon is the chair, president and CEO of GMA Network.

"We are pleased with what INQ7.net has accomplished over the past two years and we know that this year we will see even more innovations. We are giving our full support to this joint venture and recognize the Internet as an important part of GMA Network's overall strategy," Gozon said.

Gozon cited the continuing integration of content and services across different media. One groundbreaking example is the fourth anniversary of GMA Network's multi-awarded public affairs TV program "Debate with Mare at Pare." For the first time, a Philippine TV program showcased a user poll integrating SMS (short message service), landline and Internet components. INQ7.net created a GMA-7 Debate page at http://debate.inq7.net that allowed Filipinos from all over the world to vote through the online poll, with the current tally regularly flashed on the TV screen together with the SMS and landline phone results.

PEOPLE DOTCOM The hardworking but fun-loving team behind INQ7.net

"The Internet is not here to replace but instead complement the traditional media of print, TV and radio. As GMA Network continues to expand its reach, the Internet will play a key role in helping us deliver the news and provide services to more Filipinos not only in the Philippines but throughout the world. The medium may be different, but our commitment to excellence and service remains the same," Gozon said.

Prieto pointed out that INQ7.net has changed the meaning of online content to encompass more than just the Internet. Instead of only relying on the Web, INQ7.net delivers content to mobile phones, personal digital assistants and other handheld devices. "Wireless will play an important role here in the Philippines. After all, we are the texting capital of the world and INQ7.net will take advantage of this. We are excited about the developments on wireless and to take advantage of this we have reorganized to enable us to innovate and expand our services to this wireless community," Prieto shared.

Based on statistics from the National Telecommunications Commission, the Philippines already had 12,159,163 cellular mobile telephone service subscribers in 2001.

At present, INQ7.net allows mobile phone users to pull content via SMS and WAP (wireless application protocol). INQ7.net, however, will soon also introduce push-based wireless services that will immediately alert readers and deliver the news to their mobile phones without the need to text a keyword. The new wireless services will take advantage of the advent of faster, next-generation wireless technology such as GPRS (general packet radio service). To take advantage of MMS (multimedia messaging service), INQ7.net will also allow mobile phone users not only to download the news but also images. Again, push will not replace pull-based technology, but will enhance the user experience and give the reader more options, adding a new dimension to the news.

In partnership with interactive TV service provider M@gicBox and direct to home broadcaster Dream Broadcasting System, INQ7.net also launched the first digital interactive news service in the Philippines on Dec. 11. Dubbed as MD@ily, the service allows subscribers to access regularly updated news on demand on their TV sets.

"We have gone beyond just being a website. Because the 'INQ7 experience,' to use Tom Peters' buzzword, is community building. INQ7 is proud to be not just a website but a thriving online community -- a virtual place where Filipinos can interact with INQ7 as well as other Filipinos here and abroad. I would like to thank our loyal readers and our advertisers for giving us their support. It is through their interaction with us that we were able to achieve our number one status. It is this online community that advertisers are focused on reaching. It is a global audience that has economic viability — an audience that no other medium but online can reach," Prieto said.

And what does the future hold for INQ7.net? More innovation and hard work. After all, the future is something we build today.

Birthday greetings

INQ7.NET'S success would not have been possible without the support of its readers, advertisers, partners and friends. Here are their greetings as INQ7.net celebrates its second anniversary.

Readers who would like to send their own greetings can visit the INQ7 anniversary site at www.inq7.net/yeartwo.

Congratulations on INQ7.net's second anniversary! I admire and applaud your many contributions to providing excellent information and allowing a free discourse of issues affecting the Philippines over the past two years. ***Doreen Alday-Flippin, Reader, Florida***

I would like to congratulate INQ7 for its wonderful contribution to information and the free discourse of ideas on issues that affect the Philippines. Good luck and many more years of inspired discussions. ***Jofis, Reader, San Diego, California***

In behalf of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, I wish to congratulate the officers and employees of INQ7 as they celebrate their second anniversary.

When INQ7 was first formed two years ago as a joint venture with GMA Network, our vision was to develop it into the country's leading news and information portal. Today, the company has surpassed our expectations, earning its place among the most visited news websites in the world. Its culture of dynamism, creativity and teamwork will certainly be the driving force of its achievements in the years to come.

Mabuhay ang INQ7! ***Marixi R. Prieto, Chairperson, Philippine Daily Inquirer***

Congratulations and more power to INQ7! We are proud partners of this fast growing company.

In today's tech-savvy society, it has become increasingly important for companies to break down the barriers of traditional thinking and innovate beyond the norms of business to survive. I am confident that INQ7 will do this and much more, focusing on excellent creative services and interactive opportunities for online readers and clients. ***Alexandra P. Romualdez, President and CEO, Philippine Daily Inquirer***

It seems to have been a long two years for INQ7. In its brief history, amidst eventful moments and during these unpredictable times, it has indeed become home to millions of Filipinos here and abroad. It is without any doubt that the same talented and dedicated team that has made INQ7 number one by a long stretch would break new grounds and lead it to more successes in the next two decades.

Congratulations and more power! ***Judd I. Gallares, President, GMA New Media, Inc.***

When we first conceptualized INQ7 we had a vision to be the number one website for news and information in the Philippines. To the credit of INQ7's readers and INQ7's continued efforts to improve they have achieved this goal. On its second year INQ7 has become part of the daily life of many Filipinos here and abroad. It has built a community of loyal readers that want to be the first to know. INQ7 has come a long way from its early beginnings as an online version of the newspaper. It now is truly an interactive website that utilizes all the existing technology to enhance the reader's "news experience."

Congratulations INQ7. You've come a long way! ***Dennis Valdes, President, FEP Printing Inc.***

In the past two years, it has been a pleasure dealing with INQ7.net, which basically appeals more to our target market of professional Filipino Americans. The INQ7 management's approach has been dynamic but quite professional. We look forward to taking advantage of other innovative and strategic features that we are sure they are developing in the very near future. ***Alfred V. Madrid, First Vice President and General Manager, Metrobank New York***

Congratulations to INQ7.net on their second anniversary! I would like to commend INQ7.net for doing a great job in disseminating information to the public. ***Mae Rivera, Marketing Communications Manager, Microsoft Philippines***

Kudos to INQ7.net for the milestone they have created in Philippine media and ICT. May you continue to serve as inspiration to your audience and to other media and ICT practitioners. Congratulations! ***Mark Yambot, Marketing Director, Microsoft Philippines***

We chose INQ7.net because it is one of the most visited and well-respected websites in our country. We have already proven their service and we hope they will also be the same with other companies. ***Gerilyn Baltan, Marketing Program Manager, Oracle Systems Philippines Inc.***

INQ7.net has given us an affordable means to advertise through the Internet to reach a targeted audience. We feel our advertising dollars are well spent with INQ7.net and that our return on advertising investment is realized month after month. ***Ruell Medina, President, Lucky Communications Inc.***

We chose to partner with INQ7.net due to a substantial number of people, who we presume to be mostly Filipinos, accessing the website and the quality of the content or published material in the INQ7.net website which attracts people to it. ***Rommel Garcia, President and CEO, PNB Remittance Centers Inc.***

Congratulations and we wish INQ7.net continued success for a very informative website! Your website is very organized and user-friendly, allowing the reader to scan various topics with ease and click on areas of interest. ***Celia Lewis, Comptroller, Goldilocks USA***

Our target market consists of those who are basically capable of

BIRTHDAY/E8

Visit the INQ7.net anniversary site at www.inq7.net/yeartwo

Where the presses never stop

By Javier Vicente Rufino
INQ7.net

WHEN I am inevitably asked at cocktail parties what online news is all about, my usual short answer is, "the authority of print with the speed and immediacy of broadcast media."

Unlike print journalism, there is never a "press" time for a truly online news site. Even as INQ7.net editors are preparing stories from the Philippine Daily Inquirer for posting on the site at midnight Manila time, they are already preparing the day's first breaking news stories, the first of the 50 to 60 stories they break on any given day.

The lack of a "press" time means that online journalists can cover events no matter when they happen. There's no need to stop the presses when the presses never stop. INQ7.net editors have taken this to heart and don't hesitate to change the site's top stories (the four main stories on the site's homepage) in the event of big breaking news (there have been days when the site's top story line-up changed three to four times as events piled one on top of the other), hence my likening of online journalism to broadcast media.

Unlike broadcast media, however, online journalism is still mainly text-based although video and audio are increasingly important. This means online journalism partakes of print journalism's traditional hallmark: authority.

Online journalism, however, enjoys an advantage over its purely print counterpart: space limitations are much less rigid. INQ7.net may have to keep an eye on bandwidth costs, but with a single megabyte roughly equivalent to a million printed characters, it's no wonder INQ7.net editors can post the full text of important legislation and pronouncements online, a feature that would consume reams of premium space were INQ7.net a printed newspaper.

Making available the full text of important source materials isn't the only advantage of online journalism. What is achieved in print only through placing articles adjacent to each other in the layout or through the use of "See Related Story" notes is accomplished online through hypertext links. These links, which can take a reader from one end of the site to another, or to another site altogether, are the building blocks of the online experience; and INQ7.net editors use them in addition to the traditional tools of headlines, kickers, and subheads to give readers a better appreciation of the story they are reading.

The availability of links alters the way stories are written online. Rather than work extensive background material into a story, for example, INQ7.net editors give the background in outline in the story and use links to previously posted stories to give readers additional detail — letting a reader follow his own particular line of inquiry. This results in

PRESSES/E3

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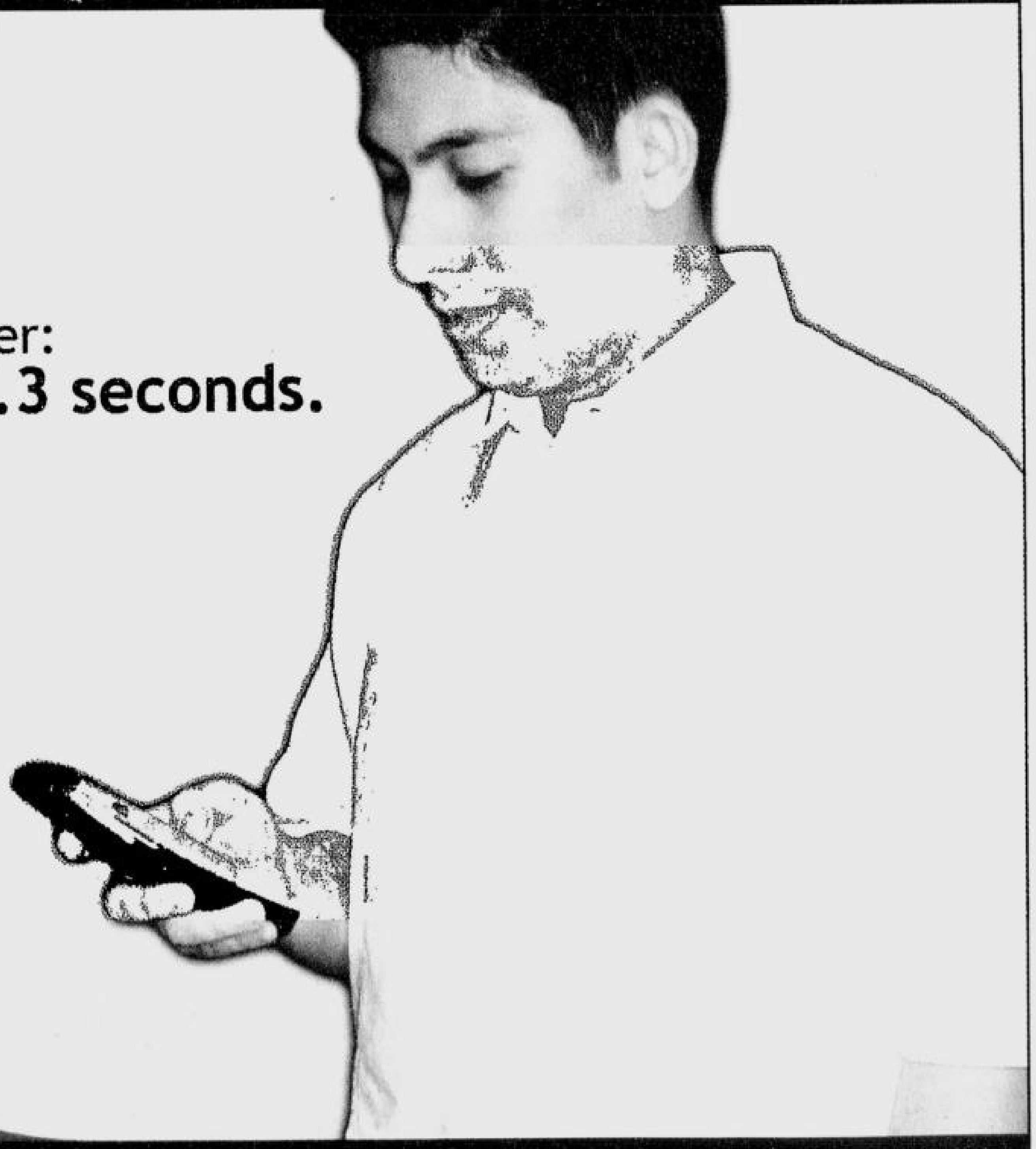
Question:
How long will it take you to browse INQ7.net using your mobile phone?
Answer:
7.3 seconds.
INQ7.net
...Beyond.

Yes, the INQ7.net website can be accessed through your WAP-ready mobile phone.
Type http://wap.inq7.net in the address bar get the latest news anytime, anywhere.

To accomodate the needs of mobile users of handheld computers, we have designed a special version of the INQ7.net website for use with handheld devices. The URL of the website is: http://www.inq7.net/mobile/

You can also get INQ7 breaking news, business, and entertainment headlines if you are using a Globe or Smart mobile phone. For Globe users, the following keywords can be sent: INQ7-space-NEWS or INQ7-space-BREAKING, INQ7-space-BIZ or INQ7-space-BUSINESS, INQ7-space-SHOW or INQ7-space-ENTERTAINMENT and send to 2333.

For Smart users, the following keywords can be sent: INQ7-space-NEWS, INQ7-space-BIZ, INQ7-space-SHOW then send to 211.

INQ7.net
your home, your news
http://www.inq7.net

A new look for INQ7.net

By Javier Vicente Rufino
INQ7.net

WITH 26.4 million page views and 705,000 unique visitors a month, there might seem to be little reason to change the look and feel of INQ7.net.

But with online news sites there is always room for improvement and with new sections and features being introduced, the existing INQ7.net site was beginning to show its age.

Furthermore, readers complained that the site looked "heavy" and "dark" and was too "text-heavy." "More pictures" was a common refrain.

Advertisers, on the other hand, wanted the site to accommodate new Internet advertising standards that had not yet been developed when the site was first redesigned in 2001.

So INQ7.net's web design team set about working on a new look for INQ7.net, a look that would incorporate the site's new sections, implement changes users wanted on the site, and give advertisers more web advertising options without compromising the reader's online experience. The team did a systematic review of existing online news sites and listed the features they liked in each of them. Then they set to work.

One of the items the team decided to tackle first was the site's color scheme. White replaced the predominance of blue and black in the previous design, making the site look less "boxed in." Softer shades of brown and gray were used to subtly set off various sections of the homepage The use of "strong" colors such as deep blue was limited to the site's masthead. Red, the color for attention and immediacy, and the site's traditional color for breaking news, was retained, however.

After the color scheme, the team focused its attention on the navigation bar (or navbar), the column on the left side of the website's main pages that lists all the site sections and areas.

As more and more sections were added to the site, the navbar became increasingly cluttered. To help orient readers, the team redesigned the navbar so it had two levels instead of the previous one. This allowed the designers to break up the navbar into smaller content chunks, making it easier for readers to find sections. Additionally, the team placed a "quick" navigation bar just below the site's masthead giving readers direct access to the five most popular areas on the INQ7 network without having to go through the navbar.

After the navbar, the team's next area of concern was images. In the old design, images were limited to a square regardless of whether this shape suited the photo's orientation or not. A "click-to-zoom" feature was used to get around this limitation but the result was often less than satisfactory.

In the new design, images can now be much larger. Moreover, landscape and portrait images can now be properly displayed.

Other changes were made as well. To make the homepage more visually appealing, the team greatly expanded the homepage's highlights area so editors would have a variety of ways to highlight content from the site's inside sections.

The inside sections also got a makeover. Clicking a section's link on the navbar now leads readers to a miniature version of the main homepage with images, highlights, columns, and stories specific to that section. Previously, readers only got the full text of the section's top story.

Finally, the individual story pages were improved as well. Rather than break up lengthy articles into individual "sub-pages," articles now appeared on one whole page (very lengthy articles would still be broken up but as independent, linked articles rather than sub-pages).

These changes are only the latest developments in INQ7.net's transformation into a better online news site for its readers. True, the look may have changed, but INQ7.net remains the same trusted source of online news.

(*The author is editor in chief and senior vice president of INQ7 Interactive Inc.*)

TOP executives of the company set the direction for INQ7 during the weekly Web Biz meetings

INQ7 Beyond

Presses . . .

From page E2

articles that are more concise than print articles but are arguably even more comprehensive.

Links can also be used to provide an additional perspective on a story that a reader might otherwise miss. An article on consumer groups assailing oil price hikes, for example, can be linked to an article on INQ7money (INQ7.net's business section) discussing how oil companies are angling for control of Iraq's oil wealth. In print these two stories could be pages apart; online, they are only a click away.

Links can also be used to tie a text-based story with visual material, giving online readers a chance to see and hear as well as read the news. On INQ7.net, for example, stories are linked to related segments of GMA Network's Frontpage evening newscast, which are uploaded on the site at 8:30 p.m. Manila time every weekday. GMA-7 hourly Flash Reports accompany INQ7.net's breaking news and sometimes stand on their own as breaking news stories in their own right. Combining the visual impact of video with the authority and depth of text-based articles gives online readers a news experience that would be hard to duplicate offline.

The most important hallmark, however, of online journalism is neither speed nor links but interactivity. Print and broadcast journalism give readers relatively little room to react to the news being presented to them. You can write a letter to the editor or call a radio station but you are competing for limited space in the Letters section and limited phone lines and airtime at the radio station. Online, however, you have polls, message boards and e-mail with which to have your say. One has only to look at the often passionate exchange of views on INQ7.net's Discussions area and the popularity of INQ7.net's poll site for GMA-7's Debate show to see how enthusiastic online readers are about discussing the news.

Moreover, the communication is no longer just between editor and reader, but reader to reader as articles are distributed by e-mail and quoted on message boards. The result is the development of a community fostered and developed by the shared experience of reading and interacting online.

The traditional saw about the differences between the different media holds that radio is the fastest, television has the most impact, and print is the most authoritative. Online journalism may combine the authority of print with the speed of radio and the impact of television, but its true essence is interactivity.

(*The author is editor in chief and senior vice president of INQ7 Interactive Inc.*)

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INQ7 Beyond

Making online advertising work

By Fe Zamora
INQ7.net

YOU can never put a good product down. This was true then, and it remains true now with INQ7.net.

"We have excellent content that brings us good traffic, which in turn, results in more impressions or page views," said Ramon Lizardo, INQ7 vice president for Business and Linkages.

And in the parlance of online advertising, "page views" is everything.

Last month, INQ7.net web traffic logs recorded a total of 26,469,494 "page views" or an average of 827,171 "page views" per day. The INQ7.net homepage alone recorded a high of 3,256,859 "page views" during the entire month.

"Page views" refers to the number of times an online visitor views a webpage on INQ7.net. An INQ7.net user, one of the over 705,000 unique visitors the site gets a month, may make several "page views" during a single visit to the site.

Any advertiser who wants his money's worth knows more page views is the key to recall. And recall is the essence of an advertising campaign.

Moreover, INQ7.net is the leader among the Top 40 Philippine websites, according to a survey by Cebu-online.com based on data culled from users of the Alexa Web search toolbar.

"That's why online advertising works on INQ7.net. It's because we have the traffic of users," Lizardo stressed. In fact, about 90 percent of INQ7.net revenues comes from advertising, the only Philippine website which has achieved such a feat so far.

"Friends in the industry have asked me, how can INQ7.net survive? I always tell them: it's because we have excellent content," he also said.

"The greatest competition of INQ7.net is not other websites offering advertising spots but the negative impressions on online advertising as a result of the dotcom crash some years ago," Lizardo added.

Instead of buckling under the slump, INQ7.net forged ahead, formulating strategies to attract advertisers by capitalizing on its content. New sections were opened and advertisers were convinced that this was the "best marketplace" for their products.

"Different pages have different flavors. For instance, the Regions section was favored by overseas Filipinos, which indicates a hunger for hometown stories," said Imee Alcantara, corporate planning and business development manager of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Alcantara is currently on a developmental assignment with INQ7.net.

So instead of offering the INQ7.net as a "news website," it was packaged like a menu: an advertiser can choose which section suits his product best.

"The approach is to provide a total solutions package," Alcantara explained.

Products geared toward a young market would get placement in the YOU interactive portal for the youth at http://you.inq7.net and ads targeting the overseas Filipino community would get exposure in Global Nation, the site devoted to Filipinos abroad at www.inq7.net/globalnation.

An innovation was advertising that was "bundled" with Philippine Daily Inquirer services, like the successful JobMarket Online at www.jobmarketonline.com.

As in any field of sales, a satisfied customer still is — and will always be — the proof of successful marketing. INQ7.net has a long and growing list of contented clients.

Lizardo said it is easy, for instance, to "sell" 20,000 impressions to a prospective client who, for lack of information, thinks that is enough online advertising for his company.

"We could always take his money, but INQ7.net is not just a salesman. We are not here just to sell; we also want to see to the success of the client in using online advertising in promoting a product or a service," he said.

He cited a scientific study that an ad, to create audience recall, needs a minimum of 50,000 "exposures" stretched out in a month. "And so we work along that line. We can offer a package that would be acceptable to the client," he explained.

"We want to provide a venue for our audience to experience our client's brands, not just see or read (as in the case of print and TV) or hear it (as in radio). We are into interactive advertising," Lizardo said.

That's why at INQ7.net, advertisers are called "partners" and an advertising contract is a "partnership."

Lizardo said INQ7.net would not shirk from banding with other websites "for the purpose of raising the level of awareness on online advertising."

"We are not going against traditional tri-media advertising. We are offering a new medium. Our thrust is to convince media planners to add one more column in their budget for advertising — radio, print, television and, on the fourth column, the Internet," he said.

(The author is the associate editor of INQ7 Interactive Inc.)

> INQ7.net is the leader among the Top 40 Philippine websites, according to a survey by Cebu-online.com based on data culled from users of the Alexa Web search toolbar

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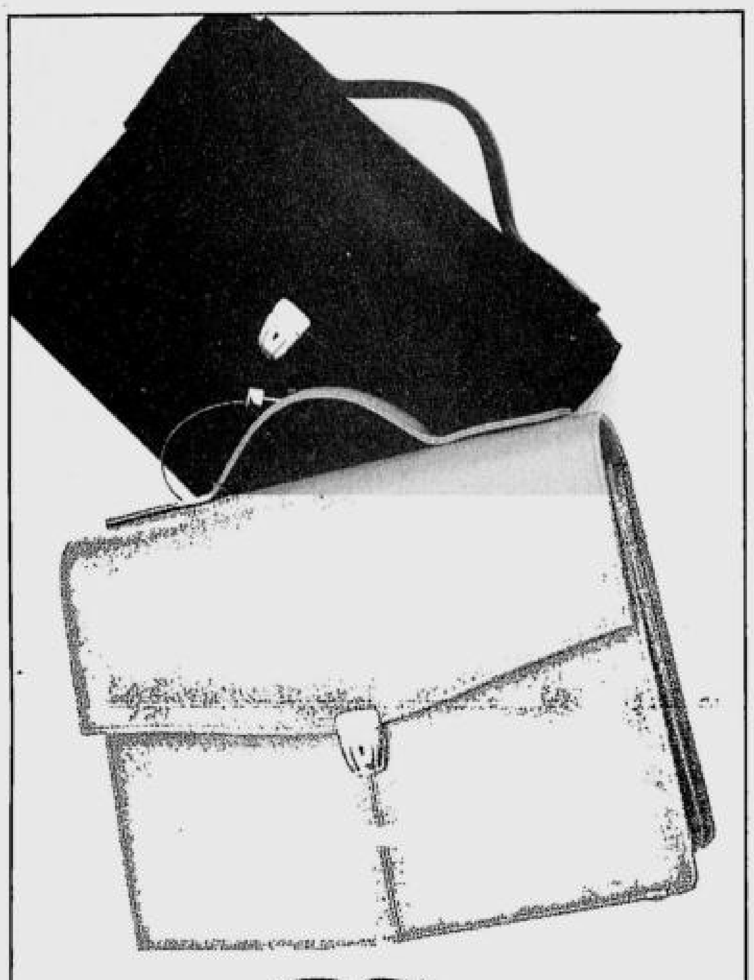
PRESIDENT **Paolo Prieto has reason to smile as he leads INQ7.net to new heights**

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Javier Vicente Rufino is proud of INQ7.net's high standard of excellence**

THE ADMINISTRATION **team is always on top of things and keeps operations running**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Content as integral part of wireless technology

By Leo Magno
INQ7.net

MENTION the term "wireless" and technology fanboys would immediately slip into a dream-like state where they appear to be drifting in computing nirvana. Wireless technology being the current apple of the consumer's eye, INQ7.net is not immune to questions regarding its plans on how to adjust to various wireless developments.

What are your plans regarding Bluetooth? What about Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity or the 802.11 standard, which is basically a wireless connection to the Internet)? Any plans on making MMS (multimedia messaging service) more pervasive?

People often ask me the questions above, understandably so because they perceive INQ7.net as a technology leader. However, it also shows how the words "technology" and "wireless" are loosely used to describe anything about high-tech. Yes, INQ7.net is a company which uses various technologies including wireless, but this does not mean that we make the infrastructure behind such technologies.

So in answer to the questions above, INQ7.net is primarily a content company, not an infrastructure provider or a service operator. We do not develop Bluetooth applications. We do not provide the infrastructure for Wi-Fi. We are not a cellular mobile operator which provides MMS gateways. INQ7.net provides rich content that would make your wireless experience more worthwhile, because all these wireless technologies mean nothing without the content that you push through it for people to benefit from and enjoy.

Granted, some information can be piped through wireless technologies even for free, but a trusted content provider backed by two of the country's biggest media organizations is not common in this industry of unsolicited messages, Internet rumors and urban legends.

Now that we've identified INQ7.net's role in the wireless value chain, allow me to tell you how such technologies are being used by the company. INQ7.net utilizes wireless technologies in two ways: First, we use it to deliver service to readers, consumers and customers. Second, we use it internally to enhance our operations, which, in turn, translates to better service for INQ7.net's end-users.

In the first wireless application, INQ7.net delivers value added services ranging from SMS (short message service) to WAP (wireless application protocol) to MMS. Text in a keyword and you get breaking news delivered to your mobile phone via SMS. If your personal digital assistant has wireless capability, you can get INQ7.net news through a specially designed website at www.inq7.net/mobile. If you have a WAP phone, you can get news through wap.inq7.net.

However, the above examples are all based on "pull" technology where end-users need to pull INQ7.net content by performing a certain action such as texting in a keyword, inputting a URL or synchronizing a PDA with a computer. What's even more exciting is the capability to "push" content to end-users, wherein INQ7.net content will be delivered to end-users as soon as the content is available. Granted, push technology is at least five years old already, and INQ7.net has been talking about it for quite a while now, but now that the market and the infrastructure are ready, you'll see this service as a staple offering of INQ7.net.

The value-added wireless services of INQ7.net is exemplified by INQ7 eXTRA, a real-time alert system based on push technology. As soon as news becomes available and the story is processed by INQ7.net editors, these become stored in INQ7.net's in-house generated content management system which deploys content to various media — be it wireless or the Web. The result is an ultra-fast news delivery system that is pushed to cell phone subscribers, onto the INQ7.net WAP page and onto the INQ7.net website. In the case of mobile phone users, they don't need to go through the usual process of texting a keyword to the cellular phone operator — they get the news almost instantly, even faster than they would get it from news wire services or by turning on a computer and visiting a website like CNN.

INQ7 eXTRA also has an MMS component. In partnership with Agence France-Presse, MMS phone users can choose to download any of 10 pictures which INQ7.net will offer daily. In other cellular partnerships, end-users can get INQ7.net news from menu-based phone systems.

Expect INQ7 eXTRA to be on your phones within the second quarter of this year.

Another way INQ7.net provides wireless ser-

CONTENT/E6

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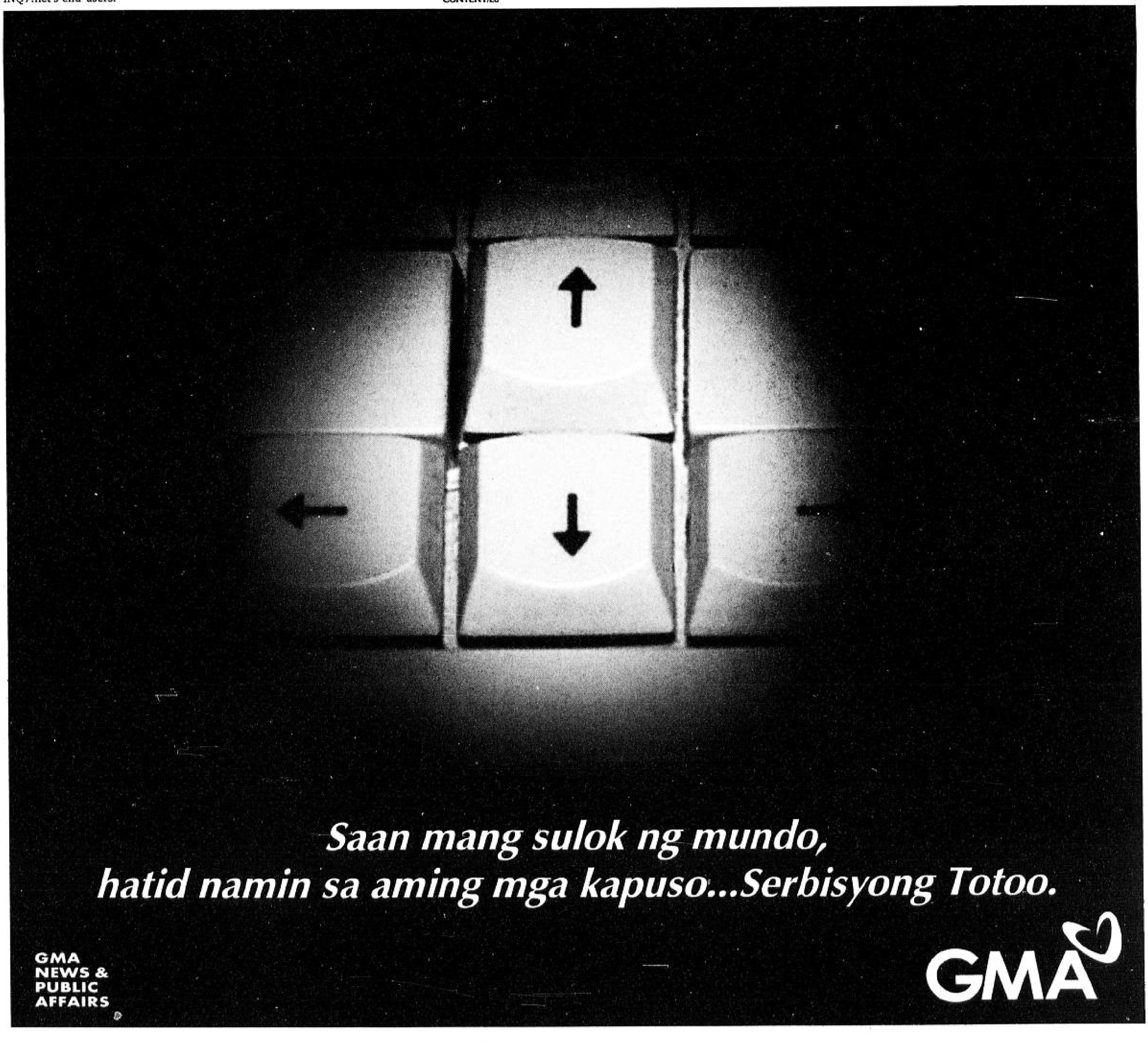

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GMA NEWS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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Beyond technology: Good business strategy, right team

By Bobby Gantuangco
INQ7.net

CONTRARY to what some people might think, INQ7 Interactive is not a technology company. We are in the online publishing business and our company is driven by our vision and corporate strategies enabled by technology. As part of this overall strategy, the INQ7 technology department is tasked with leveraging the latest innovations to transform business processes and facilitate new revenue streams.

Every week, the tech department is swamped with new projects, whether it is making a banner ad campaign, creating a special website, coding new features in our SMS (short message service or text messaging) and other wireless services, and managing the different technologies utilized in INQ7.net.

Every member performs a specific role and works together as a team to achieve the department's goal as business enabler. INQ7 is a successful company because it goes beyond technology, knowing that only the right mix of good business strategy and good people ensures that technology will be applied properly.

En Ragasa is the business solutions manager, the information technology manager for all the business-related projects and services such as the intranet and standard business tools and processes. She primarily manages projects related to online advertising, content syndication and other revenue-related services. She sees her role as the one who "smoothens the link between business and technology; bridging the gap between business initiatives and technology application."

Twinkle Tuason is the content implementation manager, focusing on helping the independent editorial department express its creativity on the Web by providing technical advice and managing projects related to the improvement of the news and information websites and online services of INQ7:

"I enable the editorial people to realize whatever they want published online by giving them the necessary tools like the content management system," Tuason said.

Maoie Estrella, the systems development manager, is the person behind the codes, databases, computer network and security.

INQ7 has developed a project management methodology to address the expectations of its stakeholders. We are trained to see that project management is not just about deadlines but also knowing every aspect of a task and its business impact as a whole.

Multimedia

On the multimedia front, we think of ways to spice up user experience in our Web and other online properties. The multimedia team takes care of site design and aesthetics.

"The challenge is to translate ideas into visually appealing websites and advertising material. We need to know from our customers what it is exactly that they want to happen. And you can't do that in one sitting," said multimedia specialist Chuy Pasco. "Most clients cannot easily finalize their concept," she added. Pasco also provides a feminine touch to website production. She showcased her creative ability in "Love Affair," the INQ7 Valentine online special.

Multimedia specialist Brian Vicencio,.who is used to creating high-impact and visually appealing personal hobby sites, stressed that in designing webpages for INQ7, he needs to "consider download speed, usability and simplicity" because of the website's broader audience demographics and high traffic (the more pages are downloaded, the more resources are required to deliver the content.) Also, website development in INQ7 is a group effort and a number of stakeholders provide their own input — the editorial team, for instance.

Entrepreneurial mindset

Soon, Internet protocol will dominate both the wired and wireless world. The distinction between landline and mobile phones will blur. Wireless will move beyond SMS. Universal mobile telecommunications systems will become a reality worldwide. Mobile, real-time and high-speed access to data and information will become the norm. With these technology innovations, audiences and advertisers will demand more interactivity.

We need to always widen our horizon, have in-depth knowledge of the products and services we are offering and, most of all, foster an entrepreneurial mindset so we can see the business impact of every project.

The real challenge for the technology team is how to provide solutions to every big idea that comes along. We are like "the drugstore of technology — you can find solutions from us," multimedia specialist Leo Santos quipped.

"For programmers, it's nice to know how the script he is doing will translate into a revenue-generating service, but his focus should be on logic formulation rather than debate on the business impact," Ragasa said, explaining how the team manages tasks while still being clear on objectives.

"It's been two years now since I started working with INQ7 and I still have the drive to pursue new approaches in online publishing," said multimedia specialist Roy Yap, author of a number of "beyond the banner" advertising creatives such as floating ads and expanding banners in INQ7.net. He experiments on flash animation during his free time, creating opportunities for our clients who want to take advantage of rich media and interactive advertising.

Learning new technology

If we cannot be at the forefront, we should at least be able to catch up quickly, especially when the opportunity for new revenue streams is great.

Coming up with innovations that are not yet available to the public. Knowing, learning, implementing and using new technology. These will always be challenges for IT specialists, which is why we must "read, read and read." Although the demands of developing or adopting new technologies are daunting, "we should not be afraid to learn new things and educate those who are new to it," Tuason stressed.

We educate people who are just starting to learn about online publishing innovations. This is our secret to success.

Web developer Percy De Leon said "we read books; we talk about it in the office. We actively share ideas and techniques with one another." De Leon, like most programmers, is the silent member of the team who writes the codes for the interactive features of the website.

Jesse Delima, data communications specialist, subscribes to online newsletters and mailing lists on technology problems and workarounds. "I try to simulate the problem in a controlled environment and I get to experience the challenge firsthand, which prepares me for the real thing," he shared.

"We meet with people from the same field and share ideas with those behind the website development of other organizations, " Vicencio added.

The managers are currently taking up MS degrees in Computer

TECHNOLOGY/E8

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Content as integral part...

From page E5

vice to customers is the company's ability to deliver reports to advertisers. INQ7.net will be able to alert its advertisers wirelessly if their banner campaigns are already online. Through their cell phones, advertisers can be informed of how many impressions their banner ads are getting, and even get alerted on billing details, contract expirations and renewals. These are all done automatically at the back-end as part of the total service offered to advertisers.

The second way by which INQ7.net uses wireless technologies is by utilizing them internally to improve operations.

The technical department, for example, makes extensive use of wireless technologies to alert each other if a system is down or if any troubleshooting is needed. In addition, the company itself is a Wi-Fi hotspot. Notebook-toting executives with the appropriate wireless networking cards go from their offices to the conference room or virtually anywhere without wires while still connected to the Internet, to the e-mail server and to the INQ7.net network in general.

The editorial department will soon make extensive use of wireless technologies in content processing and management. INQ7.net field reporters will soon be equipped with Bluetooth-capable phones and PDAs so they can input their stories and send them wirelessly to the office from virtually anywhere on field. Gone are the days of aligning your PDA to your phone's infrared port to send a story. Soon, INQ7.net reporters can send their stories even while their phones are in their pockets.

And so goes INQ7.net's use of wireless technologies for the end goal of improving its service. An INQ7.net reporter sends a story faster from anywhere in the country via Bluetooth and cellular technologies. An editor at the INQ7.net office then processes the story for a wireless version and places it in the content management system for wireless deployment. The technical team gets in touch with each other wirelessly to check if all systems are ready. Advertisers are notified via their cell phones about how well their campaigns are doing as soon as the reporter's new story is posted online. People at the INQ7.net office hop from one meeting to another while checking the reporter's latest story using their Wi-Fi-enabled notebooks. PDA users synchronize their devices and see the reporter's latest story on their handhelds. Users toting notebooks with Wi-Fi capability can view the INQ7.net site wirelessly from a coffee shop and read the reporter's latest story. Mobile users almost instantaneously receive the story as pushed to them by INQ7 eXTRA, and are offered pictures which they can download to their MMS phones.

Moreover, when the infrastructure is in place and the market is given viable mobile thin clients from which they can view rich multimedia, it is not far-fetched to see in the future audio and video content from INQ7.net being streamed wirelessly to consumers.

All these go together to enhance an end-user's wireless experience as INQ7.net continues to innovate the way by which it delivers top-notch content, giving substance to an otherwise empty wireless infrastructure in the Philippines.

(The author is executive editor and vice president of INQ7 Interactive Inc. He is also the Infotech editor of the Inquirer and INQ7.net.)

INQ7 Beyond

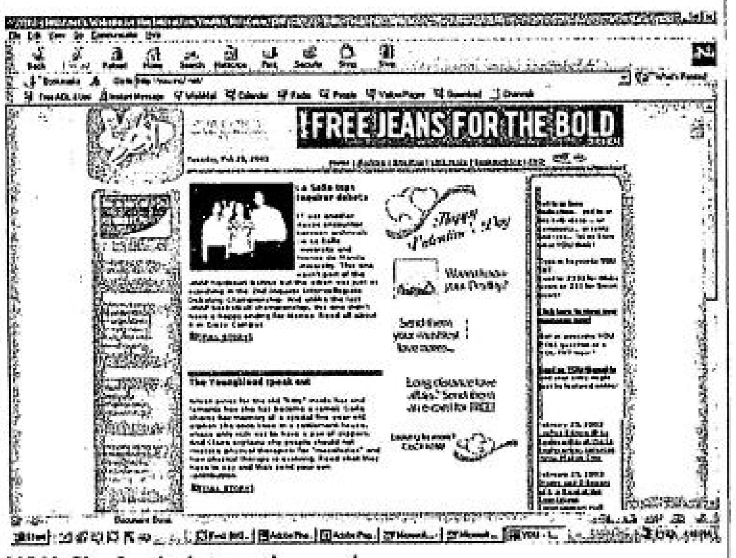
From content to communities

ARE you ready for the INQ7 experience?

When people talk about INQ7.net, the first thing that comes to mind is the news. Of course, this is inevitable because INQ7.net has made a name for itself as the most visited and most trusted Philippine news website.

INQ7.net, however, has gone beyond online news. While news will always be the site's main thrust, the INQ7 experience is rooted in the thriving online communities that its readers have built. These active members of the INQ7 community come from all over the Philippines and around the world. What they have in common are shared interests, a passion for discussing issues and exchanging views, and the desire to make INQ7.net their home.

Like any home, INQ7.net has different parts of the house catering to specific interests and activities. For the Filipino youth, INQ7.net offers the YOU experience at you.inq7.net. Not only does this expansion site carry articles from the popular 2bU! print section of the Inquirer, but it has built a community of young people who love to watch movies, go to parties, listen to music, try out the latest gadgets and games, participate in campus activities, and share their ideas and greetings through SMS (short message service or text messaging) and the Web. The key here is that the sections and services of the site cater to existing interests of the youth -- YOU TXT, for example, allows them to post messages on the Web via SMS. What YOU does is address these interests and enhance the experience of the youth when they go online.



YOU: Site for the interactive youth

After all, YOU is a site that the youth themselves are creating, particularly in the case of the hugely popular Youngblood online section, which also builds upon the strength of the well-known print edition. Instead of writing about the youth, the youngblood are speaking for themselves and sharing their insights on issues that affect them.

This year, YOU has also partnered with Level Up!, a Filipino company which is marketing and customizing the Oz World online game. Reminiscent of The Sims, Oz World allows players to customize their online character — called an avatar — and interact with other people in this virtual world. You can buy clothes, own a house, chat with friends and give gifts. Through the partnership with Level Up!, YOU will soon offer a clubhouse where members of the YOU community can meet and participate in exciting online activities — a virtual tambayan for the youth.

Meanwhile, INQ7money at www.inq7money.net caters to the needs of the business community. INQ7money has gone beyond being the business section of INQ7.net, though business news of course still forms the core, as well as the latest foreign exchange and stock market updates. Beyond that, however, the site has also built a number of interactive services that enhance the business content and allow visitors to do more than just read the news.

The Advice section, for example, allows people to get valuable insights and answers to their financial questions from a revolving panel of financial experts and business executives. Again, the key here is interactivity -- the exchange of ideas and sharing of expertise.

Another feature of the site is the Event Secretary. Think of it as the businessman's personal virtual secretary. Apart from offering a calendar of business conferences, seminars, conventions and other important activities, the Event Secretary can help you organize your schedules online. You can also choose to receive alerts on the latest scheduled events in your area of interest, to ensure that you will never miss that important seminar or conference.

For readers looking to build a career or improve their performance in the workplace, INQ7.net offers JobMarket Online at www.jobmarketonline.com. The site allows readers to find out about the latest job openings and post their résumés online through the Résumé Reserve service. Companies also benefit from this service because they are assured of an updated database of prospective employees.

More than just featuring the latest job openings, however, JobMarket Online also helps readers by offering career advice and human resources development tips through the People At Work section. Finding a job is one thing, but performing well and keeping it is another. JobMarket Online addresses all these different career concerns, from information on landing a job to finding personal fulfillment in the workplace to availing of continuing education and training.

JobMarket Online is part of INQ7.net's Marketplace, the site's umbrella section for e-commerce and e-services. Through the iShopping component of Marketplace, INQ7.net allows different merchants to complement their physical branches with virtual storefronts.

INQ7.net also caters to the overseas Filipino community through Global Nation at www.inq7.net/globalnation. Apart from offering news and features on Filipinos throughout the world, Global Nation is a user-driven site that showcases content from the readers.

OFW Spotlight, for example, allows overseas Filipinos to submit their profiles and photos. The readers featured in OFW Spotlight have come from all over the world, including Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Canada and the United States.

The Snapshots online gallery features photos of activities submitted by Filipinos throughout the globe -- from Independence Day celebrations in New York and Angola to Christmas Day gatherings in the Netherlands and Australia to activities in Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai.

Global Nation has also started to enhance coverage of news from the country's different regions, notably with the inclusion of Cebu Daily News. Cebu Daily News is an affiliate of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Over the past two years, INQ7.net has proven that it is the number one Philippine news website, but the story will not end there. Going beyond the news — this is the INQ7 experience.

Experience it today. ***Joey G. Alarilla***

The home of Filipinos wherever they may go

By Joey G. Alarilla
INQ7.net

OVERSEAS Filipinos are very much in the news nowadays, what with the Middle East crisis, the passage of the absentee voting bill and the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

More often than not, the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) that the government hails as "modern-day heroes" are actually forgotten ones — sharing the same fate as the Filipino World War II veterans here and in the United States. The same goes for Filipino immigrants in other countries, particularly if you're talking about the proverbial TNT (*tago nang tago*) or illegal Filipino immigrant. It's one thing to call our overseas *kababayans* heroes and praise them for their remittances, which contribute greatly in keeping the Philippine economy afloat. It's quite another to remember them when there is no special occasion like Christmas (the season of *balikbayan* visits), a crisis in another country or an election just around the corner, now that qualified overseas Filipinos have been granted the right to vote. What about the everyday stories, when no impending war or new legislation thrusts them into the limelight?

Since last year, INQ7.net has been catering to the needs of the overseas Filipino community with the launch of Global Nation at www.inq7.net/globalnation. From the start, INQ7.net has attracted many readers who are actually based abroad, showcasing once again the Internet's reach and its effectiveness in keeping people connected regardless of geographical distance. With Global Nation, INQ7.net has created a site with content and services tailored to the needs of overseas Filipinos.

At its most basic, Global Nation offers news and feature articles on Filipinos throughout the world. As a user-driven site, however, Global Nation is more than that, showcasing content created by the readers themselves. In a very real sense, Global Nation was made possible through this partnership with the readers.

One of the best examples of this interactivity and sense of community is the OFW Spotlight section. This allows OFWs to submit their profiles and photos for publication online, while sharing their experiences and concerns through essays that they themselves wrote. The overseas Filipinos who have taken advantage of this online facility have come from all over the world, including Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Canada and the United States.

This kind of user-driven content is also the basis for site features such as the Mailbag feedback section, Snapshots photo gallery and the Main Events schedule of activities. Wherever they may be in the world, Filipinos are using the Internet to stay in touch with their families and keep themselves updated on Philippine events. More important, regardless of their differences, many overseas Filipinos have come to see themselves as part of a global community and have chosen to make Global Nation their virtual home away from home.

After all, what is Global Nation, really? It is an OFW in Bahrain writing a witty article on the souvenir program masquerading as the "Safety and Emergency Handbook for OFWs" given out as part of the government's contingency plans. It is a tale of tragicomic proportions, where pages one to six of the handbook are actually greetings from different Philippine government officials.

Global Nation is young Dianna Capco in New Zealand talking about rediscovering the family ties she took for granted when she was still here in the Philippines. It is Eddie AAA Calderon, an equal opportunity coordinator for the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights who recounted how he met his Kyrgyzstani wife during the autumn of his life and shared his experience of visiting the former Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz.

It is Rey Ventura in Japan talking about the lucky charms that Filipinos abroad bring with them in their wallets — pictures of their family and religious icons. It is Los Angeles-based singer Maya Marin talking about the message of her music, and former Sugar Hiccup lead singer Melody del Mundo sharing her experiences in forging a musical career in the US.

It is Eric Evano in Dubai recounting how he first experienced the Islamic holiday of Ramadan and marveling not only at the religious devotion of Muslims but also the spirit of tolerance in this open city.

It is Ike Eslao in the Netherlands sharing his hope that Global Nation will continue to grow and help more Filipinos connect with each other.

It is Bagong Bayani awardee Linda Layosa in Hong Kong, recounting her journey from teacher to domestic helper to editor.

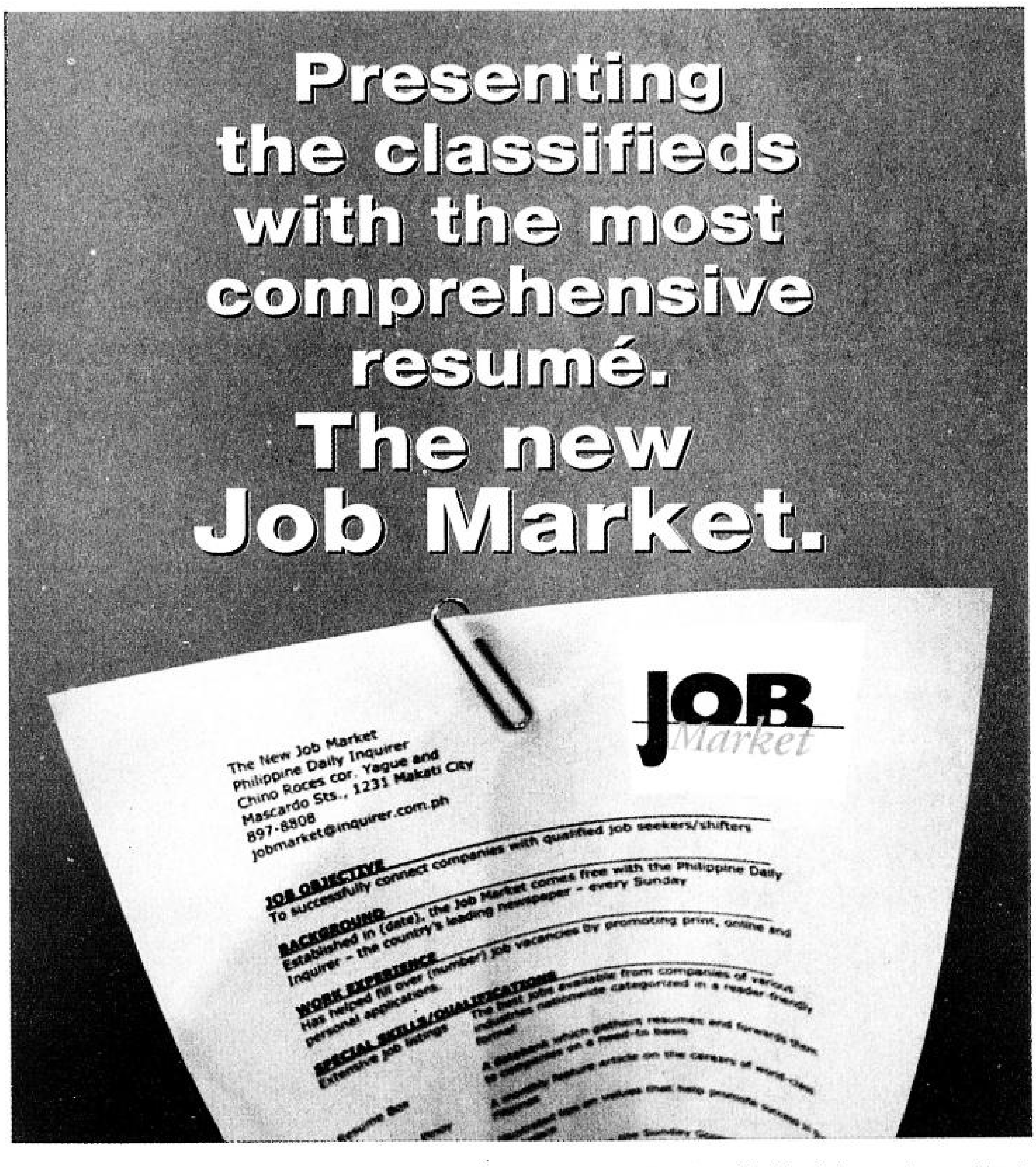
Global Nation is all these people and the many others who have taken the time to share their experiences and build this community. They have done and are continuing to do this as a labor of love, without the benefit of contributor's fees.

It is this vibrant overseas Filipino community that has built Global Nation using the editorial tools and interactive features offered by INQ7.net. Far from romanticizing the overseas Filipino, the site offers the full spectrum of the Filipino experience abroad, both good and bad, triumphs and tragedies.

After all, as the overseas Filipinos themselves will be the first to tell you, it is not easy to be apart from your families and fight against loneliness and possible discrimination in another land.

If Global Nation has made a difference in their lives, it is because they have given a part of themselves to this community — and Global Nation has allowed the world to hear their voice.

(*The author is the editor of Global Nation and YOU and special projects manager of INQ7 Interactive Inc.*)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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
JOB Market

Why companies choose to partner with INQ7.net

THE INTERNET is all about trust. You choose to get your daily dose of news from a website because you trust it as a source. You buy goods online from a merchant because you are confident of the transaction.

It is this same kind of trust that readers and advertisers have given INQ7.net over the past two years. Without the support of these loyal readers and advertisers, INQ7.net would not have become the successful site that it is today.

As an Internet company with a global reach, INQ7.net has advertisers from all over the Philippines, United States and other countries. INQ7 sales director Michael Sy oversees the market in the Philippines and other countries while INQ7 US publisher representative Esther Misa Chavez handles the US market.

Why do these companies choose to partner with INQ7.net?

"We chose INQ7.net because it is one of the most visited and well-respected websites in our country. We hope INQ7 will continue to provide good service to us and to all other companies who plan to reach all types of people with informative ads. We have already proven their service and we hope they will also be the same with other companies," said Gerilyn Baltan, marketing program manager of Oracle Systems Philippines Inc.

Another Philippine advertiser is Ford Group Philippines. Ford has been advertising in INQ7.net since September 2002.

"Our target market consists of those who are basically capable of affording a vehicle for themselves, and most likely already have an Internet connection at home or in the office because of their financial capability. Because of this, we are confident that we are reaching our target market (by advertising in INQ7.net). The Inquirer and GMA Network are two of the highest-rating media companies in the Philippines and we are happy to partner with the best," said Earl Arceño, senior analyst for Training and E-business of Ford's sales and marketing department.

"Since our product is an Internet-based service, it makes practical sense to advertise via the same medium. It ensures that the people to whom we advertise are those who are already familiar with the Internet. INQ7.net is known to be one of the most frequented Philippine websites in the world. We are, therefore, trying to capitalize on its very high traffic," said Allan Zapata, manager of BPI Trade, which has been an INQ7.net client for over a year.

Zapata added that INQ7.net has met their expectations because the "readily available stats that they provide us help us to gauge the effectiveness of our ad campaigns. INQ7 has been very professional in their dealings with us. They listen carefully to our comments and offer creative solutions based on our specific needs and resources."

MyAyala has also partnered with INQ7.net to market the established Ayala Philippine brand to the overseas Filipino community.

"Majority of our online buyers are Filipinos abroad buying goods intended for local recipients. The Internet, having no physical boundaries, is the perfect medium for our customers to buy gifts or send "padalas" to their relatives here. Advertising on the same medium then makes sense for us since the jump from one visited site to our own site at MyAyala.com is literally just a click away," shared MyAyala general manager Bon Moya.

"Our business model targets overseas Filipinos to help make their presence felt to their families and loved ones in the country by sending gifts and goodies whenever an occasion comes up or simply to send their families their regular grocery needs. Since ours is a non-traditional business model, our marketing and advertising campaigns lean toward the non-traditional as well. With the Internet, the whole world doesn't seem so wide anymore, especially when everything is virtually connected in cyberspace," added Hazelyn Paez, merchant relations officer of MyAyala.

Joy Alampay, marketing team leader of MyAyala, said that INQ7.net has met their expectations and made an impact on their business.

"We are able to inform and reach out to the network INQ7.net has established with institutions, corporations and businesses with the same models," Alampay said.

The US market has proven to be a growing source of revenue streams for INQ7.net. More and more companies in the US are leveraging on INQ7.net's strong content, interactivity and market reach to share their messages to their target audience.

"Internet advertising enables us to reach our target customers at their homes, work, or wherever they have access to the Internet 24 x 7. We chose to partner with INQ7.net due to a substantial number of people, who we presume to be mostly Filipinos, accessing the website and the quality of the content or published material in the INQ7.net website which attracts people to it," said Rommel Garcia, president and CEO of US-based PNB Remittance Centers Inc.

Metrobank New York also cited how INQ7.net reaches out to their target market — the community of Filipino-American professionals.

"Since our target market is composed mostly of professionals who are Internet-savvy and most likely use the Internet to get news updates, we are able to reach this market via Internet advertising. The INQ7.net management is dynamic, aggressive and more professional. The website was also more attractive so we made our decision based on what we felt would reflect our target market's attitude. INQ7.net opened up a lot of different possibilities and showed our management another approach to developing the business. In the past two years, it has been a pleasure dealing with INQ7.net, which basically appeals more to our target market of professional Filipino Americans. The INQ7 management's approach has been dynamic but quite professional. We look forward to taking advantage of other innovative and strategic features that we are sure they are developing in the very near future," said Alfred V. Madrid, first vice president and general manager of Metrobank New York.

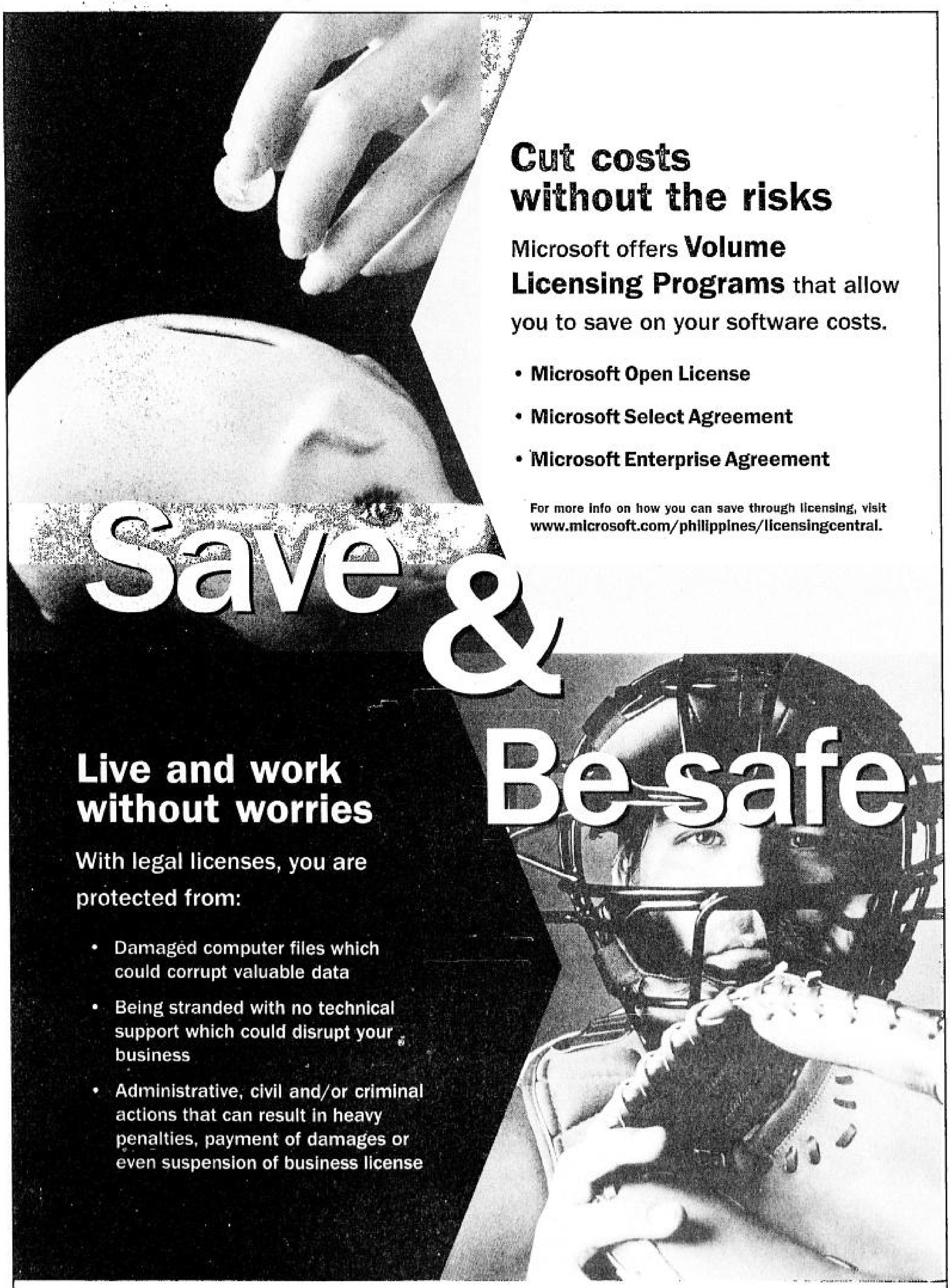
"INQ7.net has given us an affordable means to advertise through the Internet to reach a targeted audience. We feel our advertising dollars are well spent with INQ7.net and that our return on advertising investment is realized month after month. Fresh and informative content is the key to bringing back Internet surfers. Only a handful of Filipino websites update content regularly. Once content is stale, surfers have no reason to visit a website again. The frequent "hot off the press" online content found in INQ7.net not only brings in new Internet users, but repeat users who will constantly see our advertisements as reminders," said Ruell Medina, president of Lucky Communications Inc.

Goldilocks USA is also using INQ7.net to reach out to the Filipino community in the US.

"With the Goldilocks mail order business, our link with INQ7.net allows the readership of INQ7 to immediately access our website for information on our mail order products.

The big audience of INQ7.net provides us with a greater market to reach and inform people of our products and promotions. INQ7.net has met our expectations by increasing awareness of Goldilocks' presence on the Internet and letting their readership have the opportunity to visit our website by clicking on our icon. Congratulations and we wish INQ7.net continued success for a very informative website! Your website is very organized and user-friendly, allowing the reader to scan various topics with ease and click on areas of interest," said Celia Lewis, comptroller of Goldilocks USA.

Over the past two years, advertisers have chosen INQ7.net as their trusted partner — and INQ7.net will continue to work hard to prove itself worthy of that trust. ***Joey G. Alarilla***



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Technology . . .

From page E6

Science. "That's our way of coping with technology innovations. We need to acquire the right discipline in dealing with, using and developing information technology," Estrella said.

When asked how they cope with stress, Tuason said, "We go out with our officemates and have fun together so the environment that we move around in is not just the workplace." The other team members would go out with friends and play billiards, badminton and other sports. Some watch movies and collect DVDs. One member prefers to collect and assemble robot and anime models. Others go to tourist spots across the country. And, of course, coffee and tea breaks will do most of the time.

The future holds even more innovations for INQ7.net. The technology team sees INQ7.net delivering content to even more media and platforms. We see INQ7.net becoming a global, arguably world-class brand, and we will achieve this with technology, business strategies, creative content and, the most important ingredient of all, the best people.

This is the collective vision of the INQ7 technology team. As one of the pioneers in the industry, we see the success of INQ7 as our personal success as well.

(The author is the vice president and chief technology officer of INQ7 Interactive Inc. He is also a founding officer of the Society of IT Management Professionals.)

Birthday greetings

From page E1

affording a vehicle for themselves, and most likely already have an Internet connection at home or in the office because of their financial capability. Because of this, we are confident that we are reaching our target market. The Inquirer and GMA Network are two of the highest-rating media companies in the Philippines and we are happy to partner with the best. To INQ7.net, keep up the good work! ***Earl Arceño, Senior Analyst, Training and E-business, Sales and Marketing Department, Ford Group Philippines***

INQ7.net is known to be one of the most frequented Philippine websites in the world. We are, therefore, trying to capitalize on its very high traffic. The readily available stats that they provide us help us to gauge the effectiveness of our ad campaigns. INQ7 has been very professional in their dealings with us. They listen carefully to our comments and offer creative solutions based on our specific needs and resources. ***Allan Zapata, Manager, BPI Trade***

I would like to congratulate INQ7.net, the great evangelist and role model in the Internet industry. Here's wishing you more success and may you continue helping everyone in the industry to prove that dotcoms are still viable! ***Mary Anne D. Tolentino, Assistant Vice President, Internet Banking, Emerging Markets Group, Bank of the Philippine Islands***

Majority of our online buyers are Filipinos abroad buying goods intended for local recipients. The Internet, having no physical boundaries, is the perfect medium for our customers to buy gifts or send "padalas" to their relatives here. Advertising on the same medium then makes sense for us since the jump from one visited site to our own site at MyAyala.com is literally just a click away. More power to INQ7.net. You are doing our fellow Filipinos abroad a great service by keeping them informed. ***Bon Moya, General Manager, MyAyala***

INQ7.net was an obvious choice for us as it has both the reach and the demographic profile we were looking for. Simply put, we want millions of Filipino Internet users who read INQ7.net to visit Filgifts.com and hopefully experience the convenience of online gift shopping. INQ7.net is one of our principal channels for promoting website awareness and acquiring new members; both of which are key to sales growth. Internet advertising can work. It's still all about the basics: reach and right demographics at a reasonable price. From Filgifts' perspective, INQ7.net has delivered on all. ***Gerry Ditching, Managing Director, Filgifts.com***

For the past three years that we have been doing research on Filipino Internet user habits, INQ7.net has prevailed as the most visited website among Filipino Internet users in the country. Truly pioneering, you're the most authoritative online news source for Filipinos today. Keep it up and more power to you, INQ7.net! ***Janette Toral, Founder, DigitalFilipino.com***